

"Six Foot Of Ginger Idiot (or, Ron Weasley's Year Six Diary)"

Story summary:

The whole of Year Six from Ron's point of view. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll want to shake him. Rated 18 for some sexual references and, since this is Ron's diary, a lot of creative swearing.

Notes from the Author:

This is my first ever fanfic. I hope you like it because it took 18 months to write. Be gentle!

To head off anyone who might complain about the swearing: 1) I tried to write a version for SugarQuill without any swearing and it just did not work, 2) I get the train with a lot of sixteen year old schoolboys every morning and this is *nothing* and 3) A quote from JKR herself: "My editor won't let any of the characters swear, which is sometimes difficult because Ron is definitely a boy who would swear." Well, if *she'd* let him, who am I to stop him?!?

Disclaimer: I didn't invent the wonderful Ron or any of the other characters.

This is for Sarah, my *other* favourite person from Devon.

Thanks for reading, and please review!

JULY

July 19th

Firstly I want to say that I've never kept a diary in my life before now. Words are not exactly my strong point, and anyway, diaries are for girls. And people who don't have the "emotional range of a teaspoon." But I've been driving myself nuts lately and there's no-one to talk to about it, and my sister says writing it down might help. Yeah, that's the kind of loser I am, I take advice from my sister. She's my little sister too. How cool am I?

Anyway, I don't know how you usually start these things. My name's Ron Weasley, I'm sixteen, I'm still at school, obviously. I live in Devon, right out in the sticks. What else? I'm tall, I've got red hair, I like playing Quidditch - I'm Keeper on our House team but I'm not very good. I've got five older brothers and a younger sister. I'm stupid at lessons. I'm told I'm funny. Oh yeah, and I really fancy my best friend. I'm not gay or anything, it's a girl.

So that's okay. Except it isn't, not really. It's the summer holidays and she's been at my house for a couple of days now. Most of the time it's fine, it's great, we get on like a house on fire. Harry says we argue all the time, but that's not true. We can both talk for England, that's for sure. But it's not arguing. And anyway, I'm the second youngest of seven, if I didn't argue I'd never get a bloody word in.

We've been friends for five years and I think if I'm honest I've always *known* - well, no, that's not true, when I first met her I thought she was a total pain in the arse. But she didn't like me either, she thought I was a complete idiot - so not much has changed there! I dunno, maybe somewhere in the back of my head I knew, it just took me about a million years to actually admit it to myself, that's all. This last year I find myself thinking about her all the time, in the wrong sort of way, if you know what I mean. And sometimes I think maybe she feels the same way, but obviously I must be imagining it, because why in the name of Merlin would she fancy me? She's the smartest girl in school, and I'm this fuckwit she hangs around with for some reason. When I'm around her I always have this running commentary in my head: "Why did you say that, Weasley, you troll?", "Oh well done, really witty", and mostly, "Stop staring at her!" I used to be alright around her, she was, you know, just my friend, but these days it seems to happen more and more that suddenly it's like my mouth has seized up and I can't speak to her at all except to make little jibes which I don't mean. I hear myself saying these things and I think yeah, great, well done, that was really smooth, that was. That's definitely the way to get a girl to like you, insult her in front of other people. You are such a *tool*, Weasley.

I'm writing this in bed and she's downstairs in Ginny's room - that's my sister - and I can't help thinking about her. How does she sleep, does she curl up or lie on her side? Does she snore? What does she do with her hair? She has a lot of very curly brown hair, you could stuff a mattress with it. She hates her hair, but I quite like it. She wouldn't be Hermione without the hair. Sometimes if I'm standing close enough her hair brushes my face and it's like my skin is on fire. I am honestly sure she must know, because I go bright red and get really hot. I am sort of hot thinking about it now. And on that note, I think it's time to say goodnight. Ahem.

July 20th

Here's the kind of thing Harry's talking about when he says we argue all the time. She comes into my room this morning brushing her hair, which always seems to take her about half an hour, I suppose because there's so

much of it, and says, "Your mum says are you ready Ron, because we're leaving in five minutes." I'm lying on my stomach on the floor with my arm stretched out under the bed trying to find my other shoe, so of course I'm all red-faced and dusty and a bit panicky 'cos sometimes there are spiders under the bed and I hate spiders. You wouldn't like them much either if a hundred giant hairy ones had tried to eat you. I tell her, "I can't find my fucking shoe!" She gets all huffy and says, "There's no need to swear at me, it's not my fault!" I come out from under the bed and try and explain that I wasn't swearing at her, I was just swearing in general, but it's too late, she's already pissed off with me and it's not even ten o'clock. Harry asked me later, "What have you done to upset her *now*?" Like it's always *my* fault!

July 21st

Got our OWL results today - SEVEN PASSES! That's more than Fred and George put together! Didn't do anywhere near as badly as I thought I would. Mostly Acceptables, but I also got, wait for it, an *Exceeds Expectations* in Defence Against the Dark Arts, woo-hoo! Only failed Divination and History of Magic and who cares about them anyway? Even Hermione says Divination's a waste of time, and History of Magic was the dullest lesson ever, so there's no way I'm gonna be doing it at NEWT level. Frankly I'm just amazed I didn't get T for Troll in everything. Hermione got all Outstanding of course, apart from one E which she was actually upset about. Harry did alright as well. He's my other best mate, obviously not a girl. I don't fancy *him*. The three of us all hang around together so obviously I can't tell him, and anyway he's got loads of other stuff to worry about. Oh my God, I can't believe I got an E! I've never got an E in anything in my life! Ironic how I'm really pleased with my one E and she's really disappointed with hers. Shame it wasn't in the same subject, then I could really rub it in about how I'm just as smart as she is now. Look, it's there in black and white! It's *official!* Heh heh...

July 22nd

Sod it. I was all pleased with myself for about five minutes there - woo-hoo, I didn't fail everything! - but then Harry pointed out that since neither of us got an O in Potions, we can't do it at NEWT level, and of course that's one of the qualifications you need to be an Auror, isn't it? I can't decide whether to be happy because I won't have to do lessons with Snape anymore, or pissed off because that means I definitely won't get to be an Auror, and that was my one idea, and now I don't have a clue what I'm supposed to do with my life. I wouldn't mind, but mum's already started banging on at

me about it: "So have you thought about what you might want to do when you leave school?" NO! Give me a break, it's like *two years* away! Why do I have to decide *now*? Of course, I get the usual speech about my wonderful brothers and how Charlie and Percy both knew what they wanted to do when they left school. I point out that Bill didn't, but of course, she's got an answer for that too: "No, but Bill was always going to be successful, whatever he did. He could have got any job he wanted." - big proud sigh for Number One son - "But that's because he worked really hard and got top marks in all his exams."

Yeah, well, that's bollocks, for a start. I know for a *fact* that Bill did next to no revision and spent most of the two week exam period with a hangover, because he *told* me so. Still got top marks though, the git. Of course, I can't tell Mum that, so I just mutter, "Well, good for Bill." She snaps, "It wouldn't do you any harm to take a few lessons from Bill, you know!" Me: "Alright!" Her, ruffling my hair, which is really annoying, "Fine, go and play with your friends, then. Just promise me you'll give it some proper thought. It's important!" Me: "Mum! I'm sixteen! I don't *play*!" Her: "Promise?" Me, almost shouting: "YES!!!" Her, shaking her head and sighing: "You were such a lovely baby too..." Jesus. You'd think I was still ten years old, the way she talks to me sometimes. And I seriously doubt I was ever a lovely baby. Good thing Hermione wasn't there, or she'd be getting out the sodding baby photographs again. She did that once, and I had to sit there while they nearly wet themselves laughing looking at pictures of me naked in the bath aged two. Aaargh!!!! Why do mums do that? It's like they know exactly the thing that'll embarrass you the most, and they deliberately go and do it.

She obviously thinks I'm never going to amount to anything, either. I remember the conversation I had with her last Summer when I told her I wanted to be an Auror and she basically said there was no way on God's earth that was going to happen. I think her exact words were, "They only take the best, you know." Translation: *Not you!* I might as well have said I wanted to play Keeper for England or be the Minister for Magic. Okay, so maybe it *wasn't* very likely they'd have taken me, 'cos she's right, they only take one or two people every year and they're always the Bills of this world - those annoying people who are good at *everything*. You know, straight O's in all their lessons, popular, good-looking, confident, athletic, and oh, a million other things that I'm not. Bastards. How cool would it have been to be an Auror though? Well, maybe not the getting your leg blown off and losing an eye and stuff like Moody did, but just to be out there, actually *doing* something, fighting You-Know-Who and getting paid for it too, it just sounded like the coolest job in the world. Better than being stuck at a desk

in a three foot square cubicle in the Ministry of Magic for forty years anyway. Well, that's not fair, Dad loves his job. But I don't wanna be doing that for the rest of my life. I know what I *don't* want to do, I just don't know what I *do* want to do anymore. What am I good at? Hmm, let's think... Oh, I know: *nothing*. I wonder if someone would pay me to annoy Hermione? That's one thing I *know* I'm good at!

July 27th

Unbelievable! I have been grounded! *Grounded!* I can't even be bothered to explain why, let's just say it involved an argument with Ginny which ended with her kicking me in the ankle and me swearing at her, and neither of us realising that Mum was in the next room and could hear *everything*. I suppose at least Ginny's been sent to her room as well. And at least it was after dinner so Mum couldn't send me to bed without any supper like she used to. But it's still pretty embarrassing. And monumentally uncool in front of Hermione. Cool people don't have fights with their little sister, no matter how annoying she is. It's only half eight as well, what am I supposed to do for the rest of the evening? Any suggestions? Any *clean* suggestions? Ha, I can just hear Mum's voice now: "Maybe you could use this time constructively to consider your career options." "Maybe you could finally throw out all those old Quidditch magazines under your bed." "Maybe you could clean out your owl cage. Really, is it too much to ask that you might actually look after your own pet?" "Maybe you could actually tidy your room for once. Those socks won't pick themselves off the floor, you know." Me: "Maybe you could stick it up your -" Heh. Like I'd ever dare say anything like that to her. I'd be grounded 'til Christmas. *Next year.*

Piece of advice for you: Don't ever start an argument with Molly Weasley, because you won't win. There's a Muggle expression - "She wears the trousers" - meaning, she's the one in charge. Well, my mum definitely wears the trousers in our house! Not that she's ever actually worn a pair in her life - witches don't wear trousers. At least, witches of my mum's age don't, Ginny and Hermione do. Mum doesn't like Ginny wearing jeans, she thinks it's improper. "Thousands of years of tradition for my children to dress like common Muggles!" She should see some of the things the girls at school wear, she'd have a heart attack on the spot. Skirts that come up above the knee and everything. Anyway, my point is, if you have to get caught doing something you shouldn't, Dad's definitely the one you want to get caught by. Not that he's a pushover, just that you won't have to stand there for ten minutes while Mum yells at you in a pitch so high dogs in Cornwall can probably hear it. Mum's got the classic redhead temperament.

You don't want to get in her way when she's angry about something. You especially don't want to be the thing that's made her angry in the first place. Dad's quite laidback. Bill says he's the calm at the eye of the storm. He needs to be, with us lot.

Mum's forty-five and Dad's forty-six. Dad's tall and skinny like me and wears glasses and is losing his hair. So that's something I've got to look forward to, I don't think. Me, Bill and Percy all take after Dad. Charlie and the twins and Ginny all look more like Mum. Mum's shorter and, um, not skinny. Mind you, she has had seven kids. Two of them at the same time. They've both got red hair, so we didn't stand a chance with that one. Dad works for the Ministry of Magic. He used to work in the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts department, but he got promoted recently and now he's the head of his own department. He likes mending things. He's got a shedful of Muggle rubbish which he used to spend all of his evenings happily messing about with until, well, other things got in the way. Mum would send me out to the shed with a cup of tea for him, and I'd get stuck there all evening while he tried to get me interested in plugs and serkit boards and stuff. These days all his time's full up with doing things for the Order instead. We're not allowed to ask *what*, apparently. Nobody tells us anything, it's really unfair. I mean, I'm not a kid anymore, I'll be seventeen in six and a bit months. I'll be of age. And like Ginny says, "Who was it who fought Death Eaters at the Ministry again? Oh yeah - *us*!"

Oh God, I can't *wait* 'til I'm seventeen! How excellent will it be when I can finally do magic out of school? I'll never have to peel a potato or do the washing up ever again! And every time Mum starts to have a go at me I can just DisApparate out of here and Apparate somewhere else. Like the pub. Or Hermione's bedroom. Yeah, that would definitely be in my top ten places to Apparate. I could Apparate in the pub *first*, then I could pretend I'd mistakenly Apparated in her bedroom because I'd had too many Firewhiskies. Whoops, sorry, must have taken a wrong turn there! Charlie told me once that the first law of Apparition is "Never Apparate While Drunk". He did it one time and ended up in Aberdeen instead of Abergavenny. Or was it the other way around? Either way, it was 300-odd miles away from where he was supposed to be. What the *hell* is that racket?

Heh. Sounds like Mum's having a go at Ginny again. I'm just glad it's not me for a change. Wish I could hear what they're saying, but I don't want to risk going out on the landing and them hearing me. Bloody creaky floorboards. Ha! I definitely heard *that!* "I'm not *twelve*!" You tell her, Gin. I'm almost tempted to do a Percy and stick my head out and yell, "Do you

mind? Some of us are trying to study!" Oh, come on, it would be funny! Right up 'til the point where Mum made me do the washing up every day for the rest of the holidays. Hey, Ginny, do you think you could shout any louder, there are probably some people in the next village who can't hear you! It's a good thing there are no neighbours around for miles actually, because it's always noisy in this bloody house. You can never get any peace. I reckon that's half the reason Dad used to spend so much time in the shed. And why Bill and Charlie both left home the second they got jobs and got as far away as possible - Bill went to Egypt to be a codebreaker for Gringotts and Charlie went to Romania to work with dragons. They're both back now, living up in London, doing top secret stuff for the Order. I think Mum's happier they're back in the country, but to be honest they were probably safer abroad. All my brothers live in London now. Fred and George have just opened up a joke shop in Diagon Alley and they're living in the flat above the shop. Raking it in too, by all accounts. It's funny, Mum used to complain all the time about the amount of noise we made, but now they've left she complains the house is too quiet! Although Dad always says there's no such thing as a quiet house with a Weasley in it. Me and Ginny learnt pretty quickly that the only way to make yourself heard in our house was just to keep talking as loudly as possible until somebody actually started listening. Especially when you're competing for attention with Fred and George. You think *I'm* loud, try living with those two.

I'm glad they're not here anymore, actually. Not just because Harry can have their old room and I get mine all to myself again, but also because when they *are* here, they never miss an opportunity to wind me up. They seem to consider it their mission in life. When I was a kid I really got the sharp end of all their stupid schemes and practical jokes. Ginny never really got tortured as much as I did because she's younger, and she's a girl, but I got it all the time. There's an abandoned barn near our house and they locked me in it once, when I was about five, and told me that when it got dark, spiders would come out and crawl on me. I was too scared to go to sleep for about three days. That was really fucking hilarious. Every time they learnt a new spell they'd test it out on me as well. They were utter bastards, actually. Before I came to Hogwarts they told me that at the sorting ceremony they made you answer loads of really hard questions in front of the whole school and that's how they decided what house you were going to be in. They said if you got all the questions wrong they'd put you in Hufflepuff, because that's where all the dunces were. I was really worried about it for ages because the rest of the family have all been in Gryffindor and I was convinced I wouldn't know any of the answers and mum and dad would be angry with me.

They also used to teach me rude words but not what they meant, so I'd use them in front of mum and get a smack round the ear. Or worse, no pudding! That was really unfair, 'cos then mum would say, "Ron isn't allowed any pudding because he's been naughty, so someone else can have his share" and Fred or George would get to tuck into my chocolate sponge or treacle tart. God, I used to get the blame for stuff they did all the time. It was always two against one, I could never win. I didn't even get to pick on Ginny in return because she's the youngest, and the only girl, so she gets away with murder. It was always, "Be nice to your sister!" Never "Be nice to Ron", you notice. There are no advantages to being the second youngest. At least Ginny actually got stuff new. Being the youngest boy I just got all my brothers' hand-me-downs. Not even second-hand, *fifth*-hand!

They're sickeningly self-confident, too, Fred and George, there's never been anything they thought they couldn't do. They just don't care. They dropped out of school before their finals and Mum went *ballistic*, but they weren't even worried. They never seem to worry about anything. I guess when there's two of you there's always someone else to egg you on or back you up. Especially when you've got a kid brother you can put the blame on instead. Oh, alright, I suppose they weren't *all* bad. They might have enjoyed torturing me themselves, but they wouldn't let anyone else do it. A boy from the village once pushed me into a puddle and threw one of my shoes over a hedge, so I had to limp home all muddy and dripping wet and minus a shoe. Mum went spare. I only had the one pair of shoes, so she wasn't exactly delighted that I'd lost one of them, even though it wasn't my fault. I remember Fred and George telling me they'd sort it out, and every time I saw him after that he had this horrible rash that strangely never seemed to clear up... Ha ha! Never pick on someone with five older brothers!

There's quite a large age gap between Bill and Charlie and me and Ginny. I would have been only one or two when Bill went away to school and then by the time I started at Hogwarts myself they'd both already left home, so I never really spent as much time with them as the others. They were a bit like cool uncles who'd turn up now and then and bring you sweets and hang you upside down and try to make you laugh. Especially Bill. I think I hero-worshipped Bill a bit when I was younger. Who wouldn't want to be like Bill? He was Head Boy, but not in a swotty way like Percy, he was popular, he was smart, he was funny, he was just very, very cool. After he left home he'd make these lightning visits and throw the whole house into excitement. It'd be like, "Bill's back!" and me and Ginny would fight each other to get downstairs first and see what he'd brought us. Sometimes he'd

turn up with these glamorous women in tow and you can imagine the effect that had on a houseful of boys, all of us showing off like mad. Mum would get all flustered trying to impress them and scold Bill for not warning her in advance: "And the house all upside down and me in my apron..." She never really got annoyed with him, though. Bill's always been mum's favourite. He can't do anything wrong. Ginny's the same, she can get away with murder. Oldest and youngest, see. Like I say, there's no advantage in being the second youngest.

Actually, I say he can't do anything wrong, but you should have seen Mum's face when he told us he and Fleur were getting married. You'd think he'd just announced he had a terminal illness or something. Mum cried for about three days. I don't think she likes Fleur much, but then I suppose no woman was ever going to be good enough for her precious Bill. Or *Beel*, as Fleur calls him. Ginny's not exactly delighted either. She reckons Fleur's a stuck-up cow, but if you ask me she's just jealous. I mean, if you were drop-dead gorgeous and had every bloke within a thirty-mile radius fawning over you, you'd have a pretty high opinion of yourself too. I'm really glad Harry and Hermione are here now, actually. Not just for the obvious reasons, either. I needed some distraction because Fleur's staying with us at the moment and she's - well, not only is she absolutely gorgeous, she's also part-Veela, so every time she walks into the room I find myself going a bit funny in the head. Ginny's been giving me grief about it all summer. Hey, it's not my fault, it's like a spell, she just has this effect on men! I don't know how Bill copes, being around her all the time. I suppose I'd better get used to it now they're engaged, 'cos she's going to be around a lot more from now on. Poor Ginny's going to be a bridesmaid, which she's obviously *delighted* about, ha ha. Mainly because it means she gets to wear a big frilly number and spend loads of extra time with Fleur. Hey, Gin, I'll swap with you! Well, not the being a bridesmaid, obviously. I don't think anyone wants to see me in a dress.

I'm going to have to be a lot more careful around Fleur now Hermione's here, actually. It's not the best idea to be caught obviously drooling over your brother's girlfriend, especially in front of the girl you fancy. I went to pull out Fleur's chair at dinner tonight so she could sit down, and Hermione said disgustedly, "I'm sure Fleur's more than capable of sitting on a chair without assistance from *you*, Ron." Before I could say anything Fleur said - excuse my terrible French accent - "Ee ees jerst being a gentleman, 'Ermione." I said, "Yeah! See? I'm being a gentleman!" and Hermione looked furious and wouldn't speak to me for the rest of the evening. Or 'Ermione, I should say, ha ha. It's even sexier in a French accent. 'Er-my-

oh-nee. You should hear the way she rolls her Rs when she says *RRRon* as well. Oh dear.

Anyway, where was I? Yeah, so that's Bill: very laidback, very funny, smart, good-looking and popular. You can tell we're related, can't you?!? Actually, we do look quite similar, except for the good-looking bit, ha ha. I'm not quite as tall as he is yet but I'm taller than all the others, so I'm hoping in a few years I might overtake him. He's six two, I think, so I've still got another couple of inches to go. I *will* beat him at *something!* Actually, I do sometimes beat him at chess, that's my one talent, really. I can beat most of them but Bill's pretty good and so is my dad, so it's not a foregone conclusion like it is when I play Hermione. I *love* playing her. She's really terrible at chess, but it does give me the chance to spend the entire evening watching her while she's got her head down concentrating on the game. Is that a bit wrong? It is, isn't it? Anyway -

I always thought I was more like Charlie than Bill when I was younger, although not so much now. Charlie's a man of few words, at least, compared to the rest of us. He was the one mum always worried about, at least until Fred and George really got going, because he was always coming home with nasty Quidditch injuries, then later on, magical creature bites and dragon burns. He tried to get me interested in that whole side of things as well, brought me home some frogspawn once, but it was always the Quidditch I was really interested in. Charlie's seven years older than me so by the time he got on the school team I'd have been about five, and then once he was made Captain I started really getting into it. I got to come up to the school once with mum and dad for the final, when I was about eight, I was so excited about it, Jesus! I'd never been up the school before, and mum and dad were always banging on about when they were at Hogwarts, Bill and Charlie and Percy were full of stories about it, Fred and George were due to go the following year, and I just couldn't wait 'til it was my turn.

Anyway, the match: it was great, a real nailbiter, only ten points in it, and they *won!* All his team mates carried Charlie around the pitch on their shoulders - he's a big bloke too, Charlie - and they were all chanting his name, the crowd too: "Char-lie! Char-lie! Char-lie!" It was just brilliant. How cool was Charlie? I got really obsessed with Quidditch after that. I pestered Dad for ages to take me to a proper match. That's the reason I ended up supporting the Chudley Cannons, because they were the only team Dad could get tickets for. They were bottom of the league then. I think Dad knew a bloke at work who knew a bloke. It's a shame Charlie didn't take it further though. People were always saying he could have played for

England. I still meet people now who say, "Oh, you're Charlie Weasley's little brother? When's he going to give up all that dragon rubbish and go back to playing Quidditch?" Charlie just says if you'd got the chance to work with dragons, nothing else in the world compares, even winning the World Cup didn't have the same appeal anymore. He's got a tattoo of a dragon on his leg, he showed it to me once on the promise I didn't tell mum, because she'd have gone ballistic. It's really cool, he had it done in Romania with all the other blokes he works with. I think they were drunk. It would have been brilliant though, imagine having a professional Quidditch player in the family! He might even have got to play against Bulgaria. I'd have paid good money to see a Weasley boy knock Krum off his broomstick with a Bludger. "That's it, Charlie, aim for the crotch!"

So then there's Percy, who's definitely *not* cool. Percy would never get drunk and get a tattoo. I think he must have been the bane of the twins' lives like they were with mine. Mum was always saying to them, "Why can't you be *good* like Percy?" And they'd always say, "Because we're not boring gits!" I suppose to be fair to him it can't have been much fun being the quiet boring swotty stuck-up one in a family full of loud people. Ginny's got a theory, actually, on why Percy grew up to be so sensible (boring!). 'Cos there were three whole years when Charlie and Bill were off at school and mum had her hands full with me and Ginny, who were both still under five, so poor Percy got stuck babysitting the twins from hell. And I know what they're like, they'd have been a nightmare, playing practical jokes and running rings around him and generally making his life as difficult as possible. I suppose I should feel slightly sympathetic, but it's hard when he's such a snotrag. I haven't spoken to him in about a year, none of us have. He had this huge row with Dad where he basically accused him of putting us all in danger by supporting Dumbledore when he should be toeing the Ministry line. He said some other things as well, things that are going to take some forgiving, I can tell you. Like Dad's got no ambition and that's why we've never had any money and stuff. And then he packed his trunk and left, and we haven't seen him since. I think Charlie wanted to go round and punch him but Bill talked him out of it. Shame. Anyway, I don't want to talk about Percy. He needs to sort himself out. Mum cries all the time now, and that's mostly because of him. "What if something happened to him and we weren't talking, I'd never forgive myself!" It's his own fault though, he's the one who put his job before his family. Personally, I don't care if I never see him again.

After Percy you get Fred and George, the "Havoc Twins", as Bill used to call them, and then me and Ginny, the runts of the litter, as Fred and George used to call *us*. Ah, Ginny, my dear little sister who can do no

wrong. Ginny always says that once they had Bill they kept trying for a girl until they got one, so all the rest of us were just disappointments. Oh no, not another boy! Mum says that's not true at all. (Ginny: "Well, she would say that, wouldn't she? She probably just didn't want to hurt your feelings!") She says she never expected a girl because the Weasleys don't have girls. Ginny's the first one born on Dad's side of the family for like two hundred years or something. I'm not kidding, it's really been that long. Ginny reckons she's broken our run of bad luck (!!!), so we'll all only have daughters from now on. Oh, joy. We made a bet, actually, on what Bill and Fleur's first kid turns out to be. She swears it's going to be a girl and I'm absolutely positive it'll be a boy. I reckon I've got that ten Galleons in the bag. After all, I've got two hundred years of history on my side. Ginny was obviously just a freak accident!

I'm probably closer to Ginny than to anyone else in my family, but that's because there's only a year between us so we spent nearly all our time together when we were growing up. Jesus, I had to share a *room* with her 'til I was about eight. We used to fight a lot. Proper fights too, with punching and kicking. It would really piss me off how I always got the blame for everything - "Don't hit your sister!" "She hit me first!" "That's not the point, you're bigger than her, you could do her an injury!" Yeah, right. Tell that to my bruised ankle. She's pretty tough, Ginny. I suppose when you've got six brothers you have to be. She's got a temper on her too, we both have. I think Mum got sick of pulling us apart all the time. "Stop arguing, I've got one of my headaches coming on!" Having said that, she can be pretty funny - she could challenge me for the All-England Sarcasm Championships - and she can always cheer me up when I'm in a bad mood. We've got this thing we've been doing for years, when one of us is pissed off the other one will try to make them laugh by pulling stupid faces and generally just being really silly. Always works, too. Well, it's hard to stay annoyed when someone's doing a monkey impression six inches in front of your face.

I'd never admit it, of course, but I'm actually quite proud of Ginny. She used to be really quiet with anyone outside of the family and I was worried she'd have problems making friends when she started at school. She had a terrible first year, pretty much as bad as it could get, but she's really made up for it since. She seems to have about a million friends - not to mention *boyfriends*, which I'm not wildly happy about - and she's doing really well in her lessons, and since last year I now have to put up with her outshining me on the Quidditch team as well. The boyfriend thing - well, that's a sore subject. She used to have this *huge* crush on Harry all the way through second and third year, it was hilarious. She wouldn't even

speak if he was in the same room. But that was alright, it was funny, that's all. It was the sort of thing you expect from your little sister. Embarrassing crushes on your best mate. But the next thing you know she's actually *going out with* this kid Michael Corner, who is like the biggest idiot, who thinks he's really clever and funny, and is so *not*. The most annoying thing about him was that he wasn't even scared of me. Okay, that sounds stupid. But you know what I mean, he *should* have been scared of me - I'm her older brother, for God's sake! - but he wasn't. He used to give me these irritating little smirks like he thought he was cleverer than me or something. Like he knew he could get away with anything, because Ginny would stick up for him. Smug little creep. She dumped him eventually, of course.

And now she's going out with Dean, which I don't even wanna talk about, thanks very much. It's not that I don't like him. That's just the problem, I *do* like him. He's a nice bloke, Dean. But he was my friend, not hers. I don't go around getting off with *her* friends, do I? Yeah, like any of them would ever fancy *me*. She seems to have loads of boy friends as well. Friends who are boys, I mean. They're all cocky little sods, too. They're younger than me, but they're all about a million times cooler and more confident and they all do that Michael Corner thing of practically laughing in your face when they're talking to you. Like you just know they're taking the piss out of you, but you can't prove it. Jesus, I sound like my mum. Kids today! Honestly, no respect for their elders and betters. Well, elders, anyway.

We were talking about this earlier, actually. It's why we ended up fighting in the first place, and why I'm stuck up here with only an owl for company. Ginny wanted to know if I was really alright about her going out with Dean. I said yeah, I suppose, I mean, at least she'd picked someone half-decent this time and not a complete tosser, and anyway, wasn't it a bit late asking me now she was already going out with him? She sighed and said it's a nightmare having six older brothers, imagine how scary that must be for any bloke who wants to go out with her. She said she thought at least I might be different. I said, "What on earth gave you that idea?" and she laughed and said, "You wait 'til you get a girlfriend, I'm going to give you so much grief. I'm going to be the sister-in-law from hell." I said, "No, you won't, because *I* won't pick someone who's a total idiot." She said, "Well, if they *weren't* a total idiot, why the hell would they want to go out with *you*?" Har de har har. Anyway, I got her arm up her back and told her to apologise, and she kicked me in the ankle, and well, that's when Mum came in. I tell you what, if I ever get married, I'm gonna make her wear the worst bridesmaid's dress ever. Something *pink*. And I'll -

Sorry about that, Mum just came in with a cup of tea. She says I can go downstairs again as long as I promise not to swear at Ginny anymore. I said I would if she promised not to kick me, and Mum frowned and said, "Yes, well, I've spoken to her about that. It's not very ladylike behaviour." I was on the verge of saying, "That's because she's not a lady", but I thought I'd better keep my big mouth shut or I'd never get out of here. I reckon I've written enough for one night anyway, my hand's practically falling off as it is. So I guess I won't be able to use it for anything else tonight, ha ha! Anyway, now you know all about my family and my oh-so-fascinating life, so I suppose at least if I do carry on with this diary lark - and I'm not promising anything, mind, so don't get too excited - you'll know who the hell I'm talking about. Will he? Won't he? You're on a knife edge, aren't you, I can tell. Oh, the tension! I suppose it depends on whether anything happens that's worth writing about. Otherwise this is going in the bin along with all my other crap ideas, like signing up for Quidditch Keeper and that time I built a snowman on the roof.

AUGUST

Aug 1st

Got our Hogwarts letters today - Harry's been made Quidditch Captain, which is pretty cool. At least, it will be if they allow me back on the team. I did sort of hope when I got on the team last year that it would make me more fanciable, but it obviously hasn't. Maybe that only works when you aren't the worst Keeper ever in the history of the world. If I was any worse I might as well be playing for the other side. Or the Cannons. I've supported them for ever and they've never won anything, but last season they played so badly they're now languishing third from bottom in the League, which is *really* embarrassing. Hermione once asked me in all seriousness why I support a team who never win anything. She doesn't get it, that's the whole *point*, you don't just start supporting them because they win trophies! I wouldn't stop fancying *her* if she stopped coming top of the class in all her lessons. I suppose for someone like Hermione, who's brilliant at everything, the idea of supporting a bunch of losers must seem like a waste of time. Whereas for me, who never does particularly well in anything, being a Cannons fan pretty much sums up the rest of my life. One long series of failures and disappointments!

Aug 2nd

Ways Not To Impress A Girl 1) Be me. 2) Chuck peas at her. We were all just downstairs having dinner in the kitchen and Ginny asked me to pass the peas, but I wasn't really paying attention, I was just staring at Hermione as usual. So I didn't hear Mum tell me to be careful because the bowl was hot, and I dropped it, and all the peas spilled across the table and landed in her dinner, in her lap, and - spectacularly - down her top. Oh, my God! Mum shouted at me ("What did I just say? Why don't you ever *listen*?"), Harry cheered and burst out laughing and Ginny did a slow hand-clap and said, "Ron, you idiot, look what you've done *now*!" I just went seven different shades of red and wanted the ground to swallow me up. I said I was sorry about a hundred times, but I felt like such a tool. She went out to the sink with Mum to clean herself up, and I could hear Mum apologising on my behalf ("Sorry dear, you know what he's like, he doesn't pay attention") and Hermione laughing and saying, "There are peas in my bra! How did peas get in my bra?" Of all the places! It's almost like I did it on purpose! She was alright about it when she came back though, she just laughed and said, "At least it wasn't the gravy!" I came straight up to my room after dinner, I couldn't face any more of Harry and Ginny's jokes abou-

Hermione just knocked on my door. I had to quickly hide this under the bedcovers and pretend to be reading a comic instead. It's a good thing my room's so small and my arms are so long, I didn't even have to get off the bed to reach it. She said, "Honestly, it's only peas, don't worry about it. Come back downstairs. I'll let you beat me at chess again." I said I might do later. I won't, though. I don't think I could sit opposite her for the whole night without thinking about those bloody peas and where they've been. Where I'm never going to get, the way I'm go- Hang on, what does she mean, *let* me beat her at chess? Right, I'm not having that!

Totally thrashed her, 3-0. Ha!

Aug 3rd

Went into Diagon Alley today to get our new school things and see Fred and George's shop - which was *fantastic* by the way, even if they wouldn't let me have any freebies, the gits. Anyway, guess which stuck-up ferret-faced little tosser we bumped into in Madame Malkin's? Yep, Draco Malfoy, with his equally ferret-faced mum, acting like they owned the place as usual. We saw him later on, he'd obviously managed to give Mummy the slip, because he was heading for Knockturn Alley with a shifty expression on his face. We followed him under Harry's invisibility cloak and saw him go into Borgin & Burke's, but even with the Extendable Ears, we couldn't figure out what he was up to. Something ferrety, I bet. I reckon he was just showing off, trying to make out he's best mates with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and not just a nasty little creep who thinks he's better than everybody else. Someone really needs to bring him down a peg or two. Or ten. I'd be happy to volunteer for the job. He deliberately barged into me and stood on my foot as hard as he could when he left as well.

It's not even *that* anymore that I care about, I'm used to it by now. If I had a Galleon for every time Malfoy had said something nasty about me I'd have enough money to buy Devon and turn it into a giant Quidditch pitch. It's getting boring, to be honest. Anyway, he can say what he likes, I don't care, because now I've got the best comeback ever. Yeah, yeah, my family's got no money, but your dad's in *prison*, you lose, haha!!! No, I don't care what he says about me anymore. It's all the things he says about *her* that make me want to string him up by his ankles and torture him with sharp objects 'til he begs for death. I mean it too, I'm not even joking. If you could see the look on her face when he says these things, you'd want to hurt him too. She pretends she doesn't mind, but she does, I know she does. She shouldn't have to put up with it. Five years is long enough. It's only a matter of time before I lose it and smack him one.

I did hit him once before, actually. It was the first term of first year, during a Quidditch match. The usual: he wound me up on purpose and I just lost it. It was quite a good scrap though. He had Crabbe and Goyle on his side - I don't know what I was thinking taking on all three of them - and then Neville piled in to help me out, bless him, so it ended up being a real hair pulling, fingers up the nose, arm biting, knee in the groin, kick in the shins, bending back the fingers kind of fight. I think all five of us had black eyes for about a week afterwards. It was *great!* Anyway, pretty soon after that I realised that if I was going to go off on one every time Malfoy said something about me or my family I was going to be expelled, which I'm sure was exactly what he intended in the first place, so I moved on to sarcasm and swearing. That's where swearing really comes into its own, dealing with someone like him. Hermione's really missing a trick with that one. Sorry, Hermione, it *is* big and it *is* clever!

But now I think the time has come for something a bit more, er, *physical*. I'm not usually violent, but Malfoy would test anyone's patience. Seamus sometimes says, as a joke when he gets in an argument, "I'm a lover, not a fighter!" Well, I'm not either of those. The first one is pretty obvious. Ginger + idiot + loser no girls. You don't need an O in Arithmancy to work that one out. The second one - well, when you've got five older - and more importantly, *bigger* - brothers you're onto a losing battle from the start. Although when I was about ten I suddenly shot up about a foot in the space of six months, and that definitely helped. I didn't get pushed into quite so many puddles after that. Still got pushed into a few though, but that's just because I'm a mouthy sod and was probably asking for it. It's that thing of being in a situation that *could* turn into a fight, depending on how you handle it, and *my* way of handling it - taking the piss and making their friends laugh - is really asking for trouble. But this is definitely one of those times when sarcasm just won't do. I've tried sarcasm, I've tried swearing, I've tried hexing him with a backfiring slug spell, but he's still the same annoying wanker he's always been. She definitely can't say I haven't *tried*. A good hard punch in the face, that's what he needs. In fact, that's gonna be my plan for the year:

1. Punch Malfoy.
2. Try not to fail everything.
3. Oh, you know, something to do with Hermione. Which is *pointless*, I mean, nothing's ever gonna happen there, so what's the point even trying?

Now I'm depressed.

1. Punch Malfoy.
2. Try not to fail everything.
3. Oh, punch Malfoy again. Just because he deserves it.

Heh heh. I feel better already!

Aug 4th

Just came up here to escape Mum. She wanted to talk my ear off about my "future" again. Anyway, she starts off with "Your father and I are so proud", which makes me instantly suspicious, then launches straight into, "So have you thought any more about what you want to do when you leave school?" Yeah, Mum, since the last time you asked me *ten days ago* I've thought about nothing else. No, of course I haven't! It's the frigging holidays! So I just lie...

ME: "Yeah, sort of. A bit."

MUM: "I thought you were going to speak to your father about it. Or Bill. Bill would be a good person to ask."

ME, deadpan: "I thought I might ask Fred and George, actually."

MUM, suspiciously: "Fred and George? Why would you want to speak to *them* about it?"

ME: "Well, they're making loads of money and they only got a couple of OWLs each, so they must be doing something right."

MUM, sharply: "Money isn't everything, you know."

ME, under my breath: "Yeah, well, whoever said *that* had obviously never been poor..."

MUM: "Ron!"

ME: "Sorry."

MUM, shaking her head and sighing: "Anyway, Fred and George have turned out to have quite the heads for business. But they were lucky, don't *you* go thinking you can drop out before you finish school and things will be alright, because they won't. You need to stop messing around and knuckle

down and do some serious studying this year, then you'll have a lot more choice in what you want to do when you leave."

ME: "I've just *finished* doing some serious studying! Can't I at least have a few weeks off before I have to start again?"

MUM: "I'm not saying read all the course books before term starts like Hermione does - although it wouldn't hurt - I'm just saying, you don't need any more distractions this year. It'll go more quickly than you think, you know. Before you know it it'll be next year and it'll be too late. Some people are lucky, they can just turn up to the exam and get straight O's. You can't."

ME: "Great, thanks for the support."

MUM: "I'm not having a go at you, I'm just saying. I know what you're like, you get too easily distracted and you leave everything to the last minute. It's never too early to start thinking about your future, you know. Why don't you talk to your dad about it? He could give you some advice on applying for jobs at the Ministry and what exams you'll need."

ME: "Yeah, mum, I'm sure they'll be queuing up to offer me jobs at the Ministry."

MUM: "Don't be sarcastic. And don't put yourself down either, you got seven OWLs, remember?"

Ooh, seven OWLs! Like I'm the only person in the whole school who's got seven OWLs! Honestly, parents have got no clue. Hermione got, what was it, eleven? Ten Outstanding and a slightly-less-than-outstanding in Potions, but that's only because it was Snape marking the exam and he's a git. Anyone else she'd have got eleven straight O's. Now *she* could do anything she wants. She's like Bill, she could just turn up for the exams having done no revision at all and breeze through the lot of 'em. Whereas I could stay in every night from now 'til the exam revising my arse off and I'd still be lucky to scrape an Acceptable. Especially if Hermione's sitting at the desk just across the aisle from me like she was in my History of Magic exam. She kicked her shoes off five minutes in and I spent the next three hours trying to remember the dates of the Goblin Rebellions and trying *not* to look at her legs. It was a really hot afternoon too, which didn't help. I'm not surprised Harry fainted, I thought I might keel over myself at one point. No wonder I failed. Hmm, I really can't think why Mum thinks I'm easily distracted!

Aug 5th

Really good day today. She wanted to go down to the village to post a letter to her Aunt, so I said I'd go with her. It was a nice afternoon when we started out but then it started raining, and by the time we'd got too far away from the house to turn back, it was absolutely pissing down. We got completely soaked. It was one of those times it's actually quite handy that my trousers are a couple of inches too short for me 'cos at least then they don't drag in puddles! Anyway, she posted her letter and then suggested we go to the Olde Ottery Tea Rooms to get out of the rain. I didn't have any Muggle money but she said she thought she could stretch to buying me a cup of tea, and then when I started to argue about it she gave me one of her withering looks. I started laughing because she looked so fed up - hair plastered to her forehead, rain dripping down her neck - and she started laughing as well, and pretended to bat some of the rain towards me. Like I could get any wetter. It was raining so hard I could hardly blink fast enough to keep the rain out of my eyes. Me, giving up: "Alright, but I'll pay you back." Her: "Fine, can we just go inside before we drown, please?" So we ran over and burst in, all dripping and laughing and out of breath, and I tried to show her just how wet I was by wringing out the corner of my t-shirt on the floor: "Look! You could freeze me and use me as an ice lolly!" She nudged me and whispered, "Ron, *don't!*" and I looked up and realised that all these old ladies were sitting there looking completely horrified, like we were escaped murderers or something. Which just made us laugh even more. Hermione put on her poshest voice and said, "We're terribly sorry!", so I did too: "Yes, we're really mostawfully sorry!" and then we carried on talking in the silly voices for ages because it was so funny. Actually, I'm surprised we didn't get thrown out, because we could hardly stop laughing the whole time we're in there and all the old ladies kept "tsk!"-ing at us.

Anyway, the waitress came over to take our order and we kept trying to put each other off, kicking each other under the table and stuff, it was really funny. At one point I was trying so hard not to laugh I started having a coughing fit. She gave me this really hard stare so I put on my best serious face and told her, "Sorry, I've got black lung." Hermione actually snorted out loud at that, then she pretended to start coughing too and said, "Oh God, now I've got it! You didn't tell me it was contagious!" and the woman looked really alarmed and practically backed away from the table. You should have seen her face, it was hilarious! I got a stitch, I laughed so much. We stayed there for the rest of the afternoon until Hermione realised we'd been gone three hours and should probably get going because my mum might start to worry. I said, "No she won't, she knows I'm with you. "*"Oh, it's alright, at least Hermione's sensible!"* She was appalled at that:

"Why do I always have to be the sensible one?" I pointed out that that's how it works: "I'm stupid, you're sensible." She said, "You're not stupid. And maybe one of these days I'll do something thoroughly un-sensible and really surprise you!" I said, "Oh, yeah? Like what?" She said, "Wait and see!" I said, "What, are you going to only do your homework a week before it's due in rather than two weeks?" She told me to shut up, Ronald, but I could tell she didn't really mean it because she was smiling when she said it. And then the woman came over and told us the café was about to close, so we had to pay up and go. Just as we were leaving Hermione said loudly, "This weather won't have done your black lung any good!" I said, "Yeah, and me with only three weeks to live already. Still, it was worth it for those delicious cakes!" She said, pushing me towards the door, "Well, I suppose we'd better get you back to the sanatorium!" I pretended to have another nasty coughing fit and we legged it outside and round the corner and then totally cracked up, it was brilliant!

I got an earful from Mum when we got in for not leaving a note, but she said, and this was hilarious, "Oh well, I suppose you were with Hermione, at least one of you's sensible!" I laughed like anything at that, but Hermione looked really pissed off. She slapped my arm and said, "I'm *not* sensible! Oh, shut up!" Later on I was telling Harry and Ginny about it and when I got to her saying, "I'm not sensible!" Ginny said, "Well, he's got a point, Hermione. You *are* sensible, and Ron *is* stupid, there's no getting round that one!" Harry said, "Yeah, that's just how it works." I said, "See? I told you!" She said, "You're not stupid, you just... do stupid things sometimes..." Harry and Ginny both laughed at that one. Ginny said, "Nice try, Hermione!" I told her, "Maybe one of these days I'll do something sensible and really surprise you!" and she laughed and said she'd look forward to it. Of course, I was just winding her up really. She's not quite as sensible as people think. I've known her long enough to know that. But compared to me she is. 'Cos I'm definitely as stupid as people think! I bet if you asked people to sum me up in five words "stupid" would be in there, along with ginger, and lanky, and funny. And, I dunno, probably stupid again. It'd be in there twice, that's how stupid I am! I mean, I can be sensible occasionally - shut up, I *can!* - and she can be stupid, putting on silly voices in cafes and stuff. She already does surprise me on a pretty regular basis. It's one of the reasons I like her so much. I don't suppose I ever surprise her. Not in a good way, anyway. Maybe in an annoying, "Don't do that!" kind of way. I'm just predictably stupid all the time. She's smart and sensible, Ginny's popular and pretty, Harry's famous and I'm - well, I'm the stupid one. Always have been, always will be. Sometimes it bothers me but most of the time I think, well, I *am* stupid, and I'm not going to suddenly wake up one morning and find I've turned into a genius, so

what's the point worrying about it? Maybe if I was smarter, I'd be less funny. It's the price I pay!

Aug 6th

Haha, I just went downstairs to make myself a cup of tea because I couldn't sleep, and heard Fleur sneaking out of Bill's bedroom!!! Lots of whispering in French followed by kissy-slurpy noises, *not* the kind of thing you really want to hear before breakfast. *Urgh.* Still, well played, Bill! Mum would go berserk if she knew. Harry says that a lot of Muggles live together without getting married and no-one thinks anything of it, but in the wizarding world and especially in our house that kind of thing is still pretty much disapproved of. I bet you anything you like Fleur stayed over at Bill's place all the time when they lived in London, but Mum still insists on them sleeping in separate rooms when they're here. "*Coming back here with your London ways, I won't have it! Not under my roof!*" Anythinghe does she doesn't approve of she blames on his "London ways" - like it's the town's fault for corrupting her poor innocent boy, and he doesn't have any say in it. Grew his hair long? London ways! Started wearing black all the time? Got his ear pierced? Shacked up with a French bird? Definitely London ways! Poor Bill. I mean, they're engaged, for Christ's sake. And he'll be 27, does she seriously think he'd wait 'til he was twenty fucking seven before doing the deed? If I had to wait that long I'd kill myself. That's why so many witches and wizards get married young, I reckon - it's not romantic, it's just the only way you can get any action!

Aug 7th

Got up to my room tonight and found that *someone* - hmm, I wonder who that might have been? - had left a Ministry careers leaflet on my bed. "So You Want To Work For The Ministry Of Magic?" NO! No, I don't want to work for the Ministry of bleedin' Magic. How many times, woman? She obviously thinks there's no way anyone would actually employ me unless Dad put in a good word for me first. Listen to this: "There are jobs for everyone at the Ministry, whatever their interests and *qualifications*." Wow, even for thickos like me? I'm impressed! In fact, after reading this leaflet you brought me I've changed my mind, I do want to spend my life toadying up to the Minister and pretending I give a shit about cauldron thickness regulations after all. Thanks, Mum!

Aug 8th

Really funny today. We were playing two-a-side Quidditch in the field, me and Ginny against Harry and Hermione. She's absolutely terrible at Quidditch, so we were really trouncing them, especially as every time she aimed for the goal she shouted "Ron!" first. It was hilarious, Harry was nearly tearing his hair out, he kept yelling, "Don't *tell* him you're trying to score!" Anyway, we were about twenty points up when mum came out to tell us that tea was ready, so we all stopped playing. Harry shouted, "That's half-time, we'll beat you afterwards!". Meanwhile she'd aimed for the goal again, hadn't warned me she was going to do it this time - cheers, Harry - so I only got as far as saying, "Yeah, in your dreaaAARGHH!!!" before the ball hit me smack in the head and almost knocked me off my broom. Honestly, if she'd been *aiming* for my head, she couldn't have done a better job. I joked, "Is this revenge for the peas?", but she didn't laugh. She was more upset about it than I was, actually; she didn't stop apologising all evening. It was great, I just lay on the sofa with my feet up while she brought me cold drinks and asked if it still hurt. Ginny finally snapped and accused me of "milking it". Okay, maybe I *was* milking it just a little bit. I was quite enjoying the attention, to be honest. Being waited on by Hermione. I mean, I've had *dreams* like that. Although usually they haven't involved me having a head injury.

Aug 9th

Ways Not To Impress A Girl 2: Bring up old arguments even though you promised yourself you'd never mention it again because you always come off really badly...

And I *tried*, I really did. I was quite happy, lying on the sofa in the front room, reading the new Daily Prophet and eating a cheese sandwich, and suddenly there he was, scowling at me from the back page. *Viktor Krum*. European Quidditch Player of The Year. Bastard. I'd really hoped never to have to see his ugly mug again, particularly in person, but in print's bad enough. European Quidditch Player of The Year! Kind of puts us winning the House Cup into perspective, doesn't it? So I'm sitting there staring at this picture, just wondering whether it would be best improved by drawing on horns or a moustache, when with perfect timing, Hermione walks in. I try to stuff the paper down the back of the sofa but it's too late, she's seen it: "Oh, is that the new Prophet? Can I have a look?" "No, it's yesterday's." "Well, that's alright, can I have a look anyway?" I hesitate for just long enough for her to get suspicious. Her smile fades. "What?" "Nothing." "Has something happened?" Me: "Just leave it." "Ron, you're scaring me now." She grabs the paper from my hands. I just can't stop myself. "Your *boyfriend's* in it." She freezes. "Viktor?" "How many other boyfriends have

you got?" "I haven't got *any*, in case you hadn't noticed." "Oh, yeah, that's right, you're just *penpals...*" This comes out a lot more angrily than I'd intended. We stare at each other. I can feel my face burning up. She just looks at me like I'm something she's stepped in. She says quietly, "I'm not even going to dignify that with a response," throws the paper back in my face and sweeps from the room with her head in the air. Why did I say that? And why can't I just learn to keep my stupid mouth *shut*?

Later:

Aaargh!!! Just had a huge row with Mum, why can't she leave me alone? I was already pissed off because of the Krum thing, so I really wasn't in the mood for another lecture, but did that stop her? Did it hell. She came up behind me when I was doing the washing up and said, like she'd only just thought of it and it wasn't the *entire* reason she'd come into the room, "Oh! Ron! I've been meaning to ask... did you get a chance to have a look at that leaflet at all?"

ME: "What leaflet would that be, then?"

HER: "Don't be cheeky, you know perfectly well what leaflet."

ME, gearing up for an argument: "I had a look, yeah."

HER: "Well?"

ME: "Well, what?"

HER: "There's no need to speak to me in that tone of voice, young man, I'm doing this for your own good, you know."

ME, without thinking: "That'll be a first."

Horrible silence. I realise immediately that I've gone too far. Mum's voice goes up a couple of octaves. "How *dare* you accuse me of not caring about you?"

ME: "That's not what I - "

HER, not even listening: "Well, if you don't care about your *own* future, I don't know why *I* should bother. I mean, I ask you to do one *tiny* thing, read one *tiny* leaflet -

ME: "I *read* the sodding leaflet!"

HER: " - but *oh no*, apparently that's too much bother for you, you're far too busy gallivanting off down to the village when I expressly told you not to - "

ME: "That was *once*!"

HER, shouting over the top of me: "Until you are of age, and as long as you are living under my roof you will live by my rules, do you hear me? I can't tell Hermione what to do but I can tell *you*, and it is *not safe* for an underage witch and wizard to go wandering off - "

ME: "It was ONCE!"

HER, not stopping for breath: " - on their own with the way things are! I thought you might be grown-up enough to appreciate that fact, especially after what happened to you at the Ministry, but apparently not! Apparently you seem to think you can do whatever you like without any thought to the consequences!"

ME: "I don't have to listen to this..."

I stalk out of the room and slam the door as hard as I can behind me, and three seconds later she wrenches it open and yells, "Don't you slam the door on me, Ronald Weasley!", but it's too late, I'm already halfway up the stairs. What is it with women? You start off thinking you're arguing about one thing and then it turns out you're actually arguing about something else entirely. Aaargh!!! And she already had a go at me about going down the village, I mean, it was *once*, for Christ's sake! Once! It's totally unfair. What does she think, that Death Eaters are going to jump me in the Olde Ottery Tea Rooms? I'd like to see them try. Although actually, when we went, I didn't have my wand with me, so I couldn't have done anything anyway. I don't think Hermione did either. But that's not the point! I said I was sorry about a million times, what does she want, blood? She never listens! I mean, she must be able to *tell* I don't want to work at the Ministry, but she seems to think that if she just keeps on and on at me I'll change my mind. Which I *won't*. I've half a mind to tell her I want to be an Accountant like her cousin Alan who we're not allowed to talk about. That'd show her. Stupid cow.

Aug 10th

Really hot today. Harry wanted to play Quidditch but it was so hot we only managed about half an hour before we had to give up. Well, *I* had to give up. Harry said my face was so red he thought we'd better stop before I had

a heart attack. We went and joined the girls sunbathing under the apple tree. Well, me and Ginny under the tree, anyway. Weasleys don't sunbathe, we *hide*. I really wished I'd gone and got changed first though 'cos Ginny said really loudly, "Urgh, Ron, you're all sweaty and disgusting, don't come and sit near me!" Yeah, thanks for drawing that fact to Hermione's attention. I'm doing a good enough job of making myself look stupid in front of her without the rest of my family joining in as well, thanks. I kept my arms firmly clamped to my sides for the rest of the afternoon after that. We all took our shoes and socks off and it was nice just lying there in the shade feeling the grass between my toes. I even rolled my trousers up, leading Ginny to make a *hilarious* joke about needing sunglasses to shield her eyes from the bright white glare of my pasty legs, ha ha.

It was weird lying there with Hermione though. I'd never seen her from that angle before and I couldn't help noticing the way when she's lying down her, ah, *chests* rise and fall with her breathing and wobble when she laughs. *Oh my God*. Made me feel a bit light-headed, and I don't think it was just because the sun was in my eyes the whole time. I had to, um, bend my knees up and make myself look away from her. I was starting to get a bit of a headache as well. It's not the best idea to play Quidditch - especially one-a-side Quidditch - when it's thirty degrees outside. You'd think I'd have learned that by now, wouldn't you? Anyway, I must have dozed off for an hour, because when I woke up again they were all laughing at me, and I saw that they'd covered my entire body with grass clippings. I would have chucked some of it over them but I didn't have the energy, so I just lay there and shut my eyes and fell asleep again.

I think I caught the sun a bit actually, because my face, neck and arms have gone all pink and itchy. I still feel hot now, like the heat's trapped inside me or something. It's too hot to sleep again. The window's wide open but there's no breeze so that's not helping. Maybe I'll go down to the bathroom and run my wrists under the cold tap for ten minutes. Hermione told me about that one. Something to do with that's where your veins are closest to the surface of your skin, so if you run cold water over your wrists, it cools the blood flowing around your body. But she also told me that if you get up in the middle of the night and put the light on, its much harder to get back to sleep again because your brain thinks it's morning and sends signals to your body telling you to wake up. She knows lots of useful stuff like that. Lots of boring stuff too, ha ha. Oh, just lots of *stuff*. I bet you could ask her any question about anything in the universe and she'd know the answer to it. Hey, Hermione, who won the Quidditch World Cup Final in 1954? Well, ok, maybe not *that*...

Hungary. They beat France 240-210 despite playing the last half hour with only six men after Ferenc Laszlo got sent off. If only there were exams in this shit!

Aug 11th

Are they taking it in *turns* to give me lectures or what? So, tonight, Dad knocks on my door about half eleven and comes and sits on the end of my bed and says, in his best serious voice, "We need to have a little chat." Me: "I don't want to work at the bloody Ministry!" Dad, looking a bit confused: "Um... okay... this isn't actually about that." Me: "Oh God, what I have done *now*?" Dad: "Well, I hope - *nothing*. That's, er, actually what I wanted to talk to you about." Long pause. He clears his throat. "So, er, you know that girls are different from boys-" I burst out laughing. "Oh, my God, is this *the talk*?" We stare at each other. I can feel my face getting hot. He's gone bright red as well. It's hard to tell who's more embarrassed, to be honest. He clears his throat again. "You know about *the talk*?" "Yeah, Fred and George told me about it ages ago." He shakes his head and sighs. "Six sons and this never gets any easier..." I say, trying to make him feel better, "Well, at least this is the last time you'll have to do it. Mum can do Ginny's." Him: "Oh, no, your mother did Ginny's talk last year." Me, appalled: "But she's younger than me!" Him, looking embarrassed, "Yes, but she's already started going out with boys. Who was that boy she went out with last year, Mark something..." "Michael Corner. He was a loser." "Anyway, the point is, I was supposed to do this last Christmas but with one thing and another..." "Getting bitten by a bloody great snake..." "Yes. Anyway, I'm sorry if I've left it a bit late. It's *not* too late, is it?" Me, horrified: "No!" Him, struggling not to smile, "Well, I'm very glad to hear it!"

Long pause while I wait for him to get on with it and he fiddles with his watch: "It's running five minutes fast again, I don't know what's wrong with it, I really must take it to be mended..." Another painfully long pause. He takes his glasses off and gives them a polish. The tension is killing me. "Dad, can't you just *pretend* you did the talk? If mum asks I promise I'll back you up." He shakes his head. "No, I've got to do it." He glances towards the door as if wondering if he can make a quick getaway. I know how he feels. "Look, how much do you know already?" Oh, God! "Um, dunno... some." "I mean, you know where everything goes and- and- "Jesus, yes!" "Alright! I was only asking! And don't let your mother catch you using that kind of language, please." So then I have to sit through possibly the longest five minutes of my life where he stutters on about "responsibility" and "waiting until you're ready" and "understanding the pressures young people are under these days", etc etc. I just stare at my

shoes and will it to be over. There are some words you never want to hear your dad say. I'm not telling you what they were. It was embarrassing enough the first time. I just wanted to put my hands over my ears and go "*la la la*". Then he says, "So, have you got any questions?" I shake my head. I'm not dragging this out any longer than I have to. He says I can ask him anything. Well... there is *one* thing... "Yeah, how old were you when you, *you know...?*" I wish I'd never asked straight away because he goes absolutely crimson. "Oh! Er... well, of course, your mother and I-" Me, hastily, "Never mind, I don't want to know!" Anyway, I already know they got married when they were like seventeen or eighteen or something so he must have been not much older than me. Aaargh, I just had this picture in my head of my parents doing it, that's so wrong!

I tell you, if I ever have kids, I'll just get them a book about it and they can work it out themselves. Or just learn about it from their older brothers like I did. Mind you, knowing Fred and George, I wouldn't be at all surprised if they made up some of the more disgusting sounding stuff just to freak me out. I mean, why would anyone want to - urgh, it makes me feel queasy just thinking about it! And I can't believe he basically asked me if I'd done it yet! Chance'd be a fine thing. Accidentally brushing against a girl's chest in the corridor last year and being told, "Get off me, you freak!" is about as close as I've ever got. All the kids with Muggle parents seem to be a lot more confident about this stuff than the ones from wizarding families. Or maybe it's just me, Ginny's doing alright. Bill and Charlie were never exactly short of female attention. Even *Percy* had a girlfriend when he was my age. Yeah, it's just me, isn't it? Seamus, Dean and Harry have all had girlfriends, it's just me and Neville who haven't. At least, I *hope* he hasn't. Christ, that would really be depressing. Please tell me I'm at least a little bit cooler than Neville!

Aug 13th

So tonight, we're sitting outside in the garden on the bench against the back wall of the house, when she lets drop a bit of a bombshell. "My mum and dad didn't want to let me come back, " she says, "After what happened..." *What?!?* A shiver goes up my spine at the thought of her not coming back to school and me never seeing her again. Of course, she doesn't notice a thing, even though I'm sure all the colour must have just drained from my face. She goes on: "I managed to talk them round, though. These next two years are far too important, what with our NEWTs and everything..." I think, great, so that's the only reason she wanted to come back, is it? Her sodding exams. "Anyway, I've got to write to them every week, and I had to promise I'd have a nice quiet year this year and stay out

of trouble. I mean, can you *imagine* if they took me out of school before I'd taken my exams?" She shakes her head in disbelief as though this is the worst thing that could ever happen to her. Losing a limb, burning the house down, actual death - pah! Failing her exams? Now that's *really* serious...

ME: "Yeah, but you wouldn't let them do that, would you?"

HER: "I'm not sure I'd have much choice. I mean, they didn't even want to let me come *here*..."

ME, panicking: "Here? But you're not in any danger here! You've been here loads of times and they've never said anything before!"

HER: "Calm down, it's fine, I told them it was perfectly safe. Well, as safe as anywhere, I suppose, now that Vol..."

ME: "We wouldn't let anything happen to you!"

HER: "I know you wouldn't, I told them that too. But they're Muggles, remember, they don't really understand everything that goes on in the wizarding world. All they know is that for about the third year running, their only daughter ended up in the hospital wing. You can't blame them for being worried. I don't tell them half of what goes on, to be honest. If I did, I definitely wouldn't be coming back to school this year, and I wouldn't be sitting here now with you, either." She sighs. "It's hard not to be able to talk about things with them anymore. I used to be able to talk to my mum about *everything*."

ME, far too quickly: "You can talk to *me*..."

She sighs again. "Yes... but...not about *everything*."

ME, annoyed: "Why not?"

HER, dryly: "Girls' things, Ron. You don't want to hear about all that stuff, do you?"

ME, going red: "Well, no. Alright. My sister, then."

HER: "There are some things I can't talk to her about either. Anyway, it's not the same. I miss talking to my mum about things. She always made me feel as though everything was going to be alright."

ME: "Everything *is* going to be alright."

HER: "No, it isn't. You don't really believe that anymore than I do. Everything's *already* not alright. Sirius is dead. Your dad was nearly killed. Harry..."

She tails off, then forces a smile on her face and changes the subject quickly before we both slit our wrists: "Anyway, they both work, so I just pointed out that I'd have been at home on my own for the whole summer. At least here I'm with my friends."

ME, half-jokingly: "Aw, would you have missed us?"

HER, pretending to be annoyed: "Of course I would! What sort of thing is that to say?"

ME, putting my hands up in mock-defence: "Alright, alright, I was joking, for God's sake!"

HER, deadpan: "Well, I'd have missed Harry and Ginny, anyway."

ME: "You wouldn't have missed *me*, then?"

HER: "Not for a minute."

ME: "I wouldn't have missed *you* either."

HER: "Well, that's alright, then."

We grin at each other, then I realise I've been grinning at her like an idiot for far too long already, and force myself to look away. There's a very long and very awkward silence during which I stare at my shoes and think, *say something, for God's sake!* Sadly, the best my brain can come up with is: "Mum keeps banging on at me about my NEWTs. She reckons I get too easily distracted when I should be studying. She says I should be more like you." Her, laughing, "Boring, you mean!" Me, before I can stop myself or realise what I'm saying: "You're not boring. Not remotely boring. The opposite of boring, in fact." Another awkward pause. Shit, I shouldn't have said that. I can feel my stupid face getting hot again. *Such a giveaway.* *Don't look at her, don't look at her.* She's obviously a bit stumped - not used to me being quite so nice to her, I suppose - and just says, "Well... thank you. That's a very nice thing to say." I go even redder and just manage to mumble, "Welcome." Right, that's it, I'm getting out of here before I say something else I'm gonna regret. I stand up and say, "D'you wanna cup of tea? I'm gonna make some tea, do you want one?" I don't

even wait for an answer, I just dash inside, where Bill and Fleur are - urgh! - snogging the faces off each other at the kitchen table. Me: "For Christ's sake, people *eat* in here!" Bill: "Get out!" Me: "I'm making a cup of tea!" Bill: "OUT!" I ignore him and reach up to get a mug from the cupboard but before I can get it Hermione sweeps in, grabs me by the elbow and practically drags me out of the kitchen and into the front room. Me, annoyed: "What are you doing?" Her, just as annoyed for some reason: "Couldn't you tell they wanted to be alone?" Me: "Yeah, and I wanted a cup of tea!" Her: "Oh, for God's sake! You're hopeless!" Me, a bit put out: "*I'm* hopeless? What have *I* done" Her: "Nothing, that's just the trouble!" She storms off upstairs. What's that all about? She as much as admitted I hadn't done anything, but she's *still* pissed off with me! I really can't win. Whatever I do - or *don't* do, apparently - it's always wrong.

Aug 14th

Christ, I *hate* August, why's it so freaking hot all the time? It's too hot to sleep, it's too hot to move, it's too hot to do *anything*. Of course, she loves the hot weather. She likes being outside, she likes the sunshine. Me, I just want to lie down in a dark room and die 'til September. Course, it helps that she goes a nice shade of brown in the sun and I just look like I've been spit-roasted. Summer's not made for the red-haired, I'm telling you. Ohshut up, Weasley, you're whining again. It's just because it's so bloody hot, that's all. I get "Oh, stop *whinging*, Ron" a lot when the weather's like this. "Stop complaining, Ron, it's a lovely day out!" "No, it's not, it's *baking*. And I'm *dying*..." "You're not dying, you're just... sweaty." Yeah, thanks for pointing that out, I don't think anyone would have noticed otherwise. It's alright for her, she doesn't spend the whole summer looking like all sweaty and red-faced in front of someone she likes. Because she's so perfect. Oh, God! Stop it! If I could sleep I wouldn't have to lie here thinking about it. Her. Really doesn't help. Just makes me feel even hotter, if that's possible.

I think I'd actually rather be at school, at least there because the walls are made of thick stone and it's so much farther North it never really gets hot at night. Sometimes they even have to have the fires lit in June! Sod it, I'm moving to Scotland. I could get a job in the Hog's Head washing glasses or something. Christ knows they could do with a wash. And I could move into the Shrieking Shack. How brilliant would it be to have a whole house all to myself? Half the time I don't even get my own *room* to myself. I'm quite glad I don't have to share a room with Harry anymore, now that Fred and George have left home and he can have their room instead when he stays over. You definitely need a bit of space in this family sometimes. I wish someone would tell my mum that, she keeps sending people up with a cup

of tea to get me out of bed. For the love of Merlin, woman, I'm on sodding holiday, will you just let me sleep! So that means people keep barging in without knocking and I can't tell you how appalling it is waking up and finding the girl you fancy standing by your bedside with a cup of tea. I might have been doing *anything!* First time she did that I swore at her and made her jump and spill most of it. Since then she just knocks on the door and leaves the cup outside. Of course, that means that with a sort of crashing inevitability I forget it's there, so the first thing I do when I open my door in the morning is kick it over and step in a puddle of cold tea in my socks. Genius! It's only ever me this stuff happens to as well. I seem to have a knack for making myself look like a complete idiot in front of her. It's almost like I do it on purpose sometimes. OhGod, I can't sleep! I might ask if I can kip outside in the broom shed tomorrow, although I bet you a thousand Galleons mum doesn't let me in case, I don't know, evil wizards come and put a curse on me in the night or something. Mind you, I don't have a thousand Galleons, I don't even have ten sodding Galleons in fact, so I wouldn't take that bet if I were you.

A grand total of *no* Galleons, six Sickles, two Knuts and a lot of lint stuck to a very sticky toffee. Sad but true! Almost all my worldly possessions. The contents of my pockets plus: some hand-knitted jumpers (which I'd happily see burnt, sorry mum), a pile of old comics, my granddad's old Wizard's Chess set, a very noisy and annoying owl called Pig (don't ask!), and a Cleansweep 11 broomstick which isn't nearly as good as the ones other people on the team have got, but at least it's mine, and it's new too, or it was a year ago. I never get anything new, see, and it's probably the only thing I actually own that didn't belong to somebody else in my family first, so that's why it's my favourite thing. My favourite thing that doesn't begin with H and think I'm an idiot, anyway.

Aug 15th

Just come back from another walk with Hermione. Still can't work out whether it went well or not. We ended up walking down to the village again and sitting on the bench on the green, the one at the top end by the chip shop. And oh my God, the smell of the chips and the salt and the vinegar and that damp paper they use to wrap it in, it's just one of the best smells in the world. I mean, I know we'd just had dinner and everything, but you know me, I could eat three dinners and still have room for pudding. She said maybe we could get some chips to share, and I said I didn't have any Muggle money and she said that's okay, I do, and - well, that's the second time in a fortnight, so I said no, thanks. She said, "Don't be silly, it's only a pound!" which was totally missing the point. It's only a pound to her, it's like,

nothing, but I can't even afford that. And I don't even know what a pound is in normal money, but say it's half a Galleon. I get three Galleons a month pocket money and I'm supposed to buy birthday presents and everything out of that. I tell you, when you come from a family of nine, there aren't many months of the year that most of your pocket money doesn't go on other people. And I don't really mind, most of the time, but it would be nice if just once - just *once* - I could afford to treat her to an ice cream or a cup of tea or half a bag of sodding chips. She wouldn't leave it either, she kept teasing me about it, saying, "Ooh, smell those chips... lovely hot chips...", and I don't know why but I got really annoyed all of a sudden and shouted, "I'm not a fucking charity case!" I wished I hadn't straight away. Because it was a really twattish thing to say, but also because I knew she didn't mean anything by it, and she looked really hurt and offended. She said, "I know you're not, I'm sorry, I didn't mean-" and I said, "No, I know, *I'm* sorry, forget it" and then we just sat there awkwardly for a bit not really knowing what to say. Me thinking, "Nice one, Ron, you *idiot*..."

I was trying to think of a crap joke to break the silence but then she said, all smiles like I hadn't just yelled at her, "Well, I don't know about you, but *I'm* going to get some chips!" When we got to the counter the bloke asked if she wanted small or large chips and she said "Ooh, large, please, I'm feeling really hungry!" and grinned at me, and it was just so obvious she was only getting large chips so she could give me some of hers without me getting all offended again. I was sort of annoyed with her, but of course, since it's *her*, I can't stay annoyed at her very long, and it was a nice thing to do, and the chips *did* smell fantastic... Mostly though, I was annoyed with myself, because I knew I was going to give in again and I was cursing myself for being so pathetically easy to get round. Not that it mattered anyway, because the bloke behind the counter suddenly said, really loudly, "Blimey, mate, what happened to you?" I didn't even realise he was talking to me at first, but then he said, "Your arms, mate. You look like you went ten rounds with a deep fat fryer!" and everyone in the shop turned to look at me, including her. Well, that was the last straw, really. I just turned around and walked away as fast as I could and went and sat on the bench on the other side of the green and waited for her to catch me up.

It's been over a month now, and the scars have faded quite a bit already, so I suppose I've sort of forgotten that other people can still see them. We've never actually talked about what happened that night. We've talked about Harry of course, because it was so much worse for him, but we've never talked about what happened to *us*. She came storming out a few minutes later, absolutely furious: "Well, we won't be going *there* again! Honestly, I can't *believe* he said that, it's really rude! I told him he shouldn't

say things like that to people, I mean, you might have been in a car crash or something!" And so on and so on. I was quite glad really, because her banging on meant I didn't have to say anything. "Don't worry about what he thinks, he works in a chip shop, what does he know? Anyway, you got those scars fighting You-Know-Who - (*Well, she didn't say that, obviously, she said the actual name*) - you should be proud of them!" That made me laugh. "No, I didn't. I got them messing about and slowing everybody down and being completely bloody useless. As usual." "Ron, you'd been hit by a curse, nobody blames you." "I do." She stared at me for a few seconds, then she said, quietly, "At least you weren't unconscious." I hadn't really thought about that. I told her, "Well, that wasn't your fault." "No, and what happened to you wasn't your fault either." I didn't really have any comeback for that one. She's very good at arguing me into a corner. She's very good at lots of things. We sat there in silence remembering for a bit, then she said, "Anyway, I wouldn't worry about a few little scars, girls love that kind of thing, look at Harry."

ME: "Yeah, well, that's Harry. I just get fat blokes in chip shops pointing at me."

HER, laughing: "You wouldn't be interested in the kind of girl who only liked you because you were famous anyway, would you?"

ME: "In case you hadn't noticed I'm not exactly beating them off with sticks. I'll take what I can get, frankly."

HER: "Harry hates it."

ME: "Yeah, it must be terrible, having loads of girls follow you around all day."

HER: "You want a girl with a bit of spirit about her, not someone who follows you around like a lost dog."

ME : "I think I could cope."

HER: "Well, it would drive me mad. I want someone who knows their own mind and isn't intimidated by me knowing mine."

ME: "Yeah, and if he was drop-dead good looking as well that would help..."

HER: "Not necessarily. Looks aren't that important."

ME: (big false cough) "Yeah, *right...*"

HER: "They're *not!* Personality is much more important!"

ME: "Oh, come *on*, you're telling me if you had the choice between two blokes, and they both had *lovely personalities*, and one of them was devastatingly handsome and the other one looked like the back end of a troll, you'd go for the ugly one?"

HER: "I *might!* It would depend on the individual boy. Anyway... attractive people who *know* they're attractive aren't really attractive."

ME, laughing: "What does that even *mean*? That doesn't even make *sense!*"

HER, huffily: "It does if you *actually bothered to listen...*"

ME, slightly aware that we were getting into a dangerous area and that I probably wasn't going to like the answer to this question, but somehow unable to stop myself: "So what *is* your type then?"

Of course, typical Hermione, she just avoided the question completely and turned it back around on me again: "Oh, I don't know, I've not really given it much thought. You?" Well, there was no way I was going to go down that road if she wasn't, so I ignored that and said, "Everyone knows what your type is anyway." "Fine, you tell me then, if you're so clever!" "Well, it's tall, dark and Bulgarian, isn't it?" She gave me one of her withering looks. "Sometimes, Ron, you are so utterly predictable. And *wrong*." I just thought, yeah, well, obviously I'm *not*, or you wouldn't have gone *out* with him, would you?

HER: "Anyway, you haven't answered the question."

ME: "What question?"

HER: "What's *your* type?"

ME, blatantly still not answering the question: "Dunno. Haven't really thought about it. As long as they've got all their own teeth and haven't got one leg shorter than the other or anything."

HER: "So you're fussy, then?"

That made me laugh, and she laughed too, and then I looked down at the scars on my arms and that just reminded me of Harry again. He's just lost the closest person he had to a dad, and we were sitting there laughing like nothing had happened. Arguing about who was going to pay for the chips. We hadn't even told him where we were going or asked if he wanted to come. I was just thinking about getting her all to myself for a change, like a selfish idiot. I didn't think about Harry for a second. I wasn't there for him that night when Sirius died either. And alright, I know it wasn't entirely my fault, but that doesn't make me feel any less guilty about it. I told her, "I feel like I let him down." There's no-one else I'd say it to. She's the only other person in the world who'd understand. She stopped laughing and sighed and said, "I know. I feel that too." We didn't say anything else after that. After a while she realised that the chips had gone cold, and well, there's nothing worse than cold chips, so she just threw them in the bin and we walked home.

Aug 17th

Just had a bit of a row with Harry. It wasn't anything serious, just something I said without thinking that he took the wrong way. He's not a happy bunny at the moment. Anyway, he stormed off upstairs, I called after him and said I was sorry, but he didn't turn around. We hardly ever argue - not like me and *her* do, anyway - but it doesn't take much to upset him lately. I keep trying to cheer him up, but I don't even know if that's what he wants. I'm not very good at the serious stuff. I have tried, but he never seems to want to talk about it, so what can I do? Make stupid jokes like nothing's happened. I feel a bit useless, actually. I don't know what to say to him. No-one I know has ever died. All he seems to want to do is play Quidditch. If me or Hermione go anywhere *near* the subject of Sirius he just clams up. If it was me I'd *want* to talk about it, I'd be yelling and shouting and kicking the shit out of things, I promise you. I suppose that's my trouble, not knowing when to shut up. But that's got to be better than pretending you're alright when you're not, surely? Hermione says he'll talk when he's ready, but I'm not so sure. I get the impression he only tells me half of what goes on in his head, to be honest. Not that I'm complaining - it's up to him, isn't it? And I can't talk, considering there's one rather large subject I never talk to him about. But it can be a bit frustrating sometimes. We only want to help. He's not the only one who feels guilty about Sirius, we all do. And she's right, it's no-one's fault, least of all Harry's. It's just an awful thing that happened. I suppose the best I can do until he finally decides he wants to talk about it is try and take his mind off things. I wish there was something else I could do to help, but there isn't. Stupid sodding jokes, that's all I've got.

Later:

Hermione just knocked on my bedroom door. I was all excited for about five seconds, but of course - *of course!* - she just wanted to talk about Harry...

HER: "Listen, Ron, what we were talking about the other day... I've been thinking... Harry needs us to really be there for him this year. We're all he's got now. We can't just think about ourselves anymore."

ME: "I know."

HER: "If he starts having those dreams again, you've got to tell me."

ME: "I *know*, I will. But he got really annoyed last time, he said we were talking about him behind his back."

HER: "But we're not!"

I just raise my eyebrows.

HER: "Well, alright, maybe we are, but it's only because he's our friend and we care about him. Anyway, I'm sure you two talk about me when I'm not there."

ME, outraged: "We do *not*!"

HER: "Well, obviously you *do*..."

ME: "No. We don't."

HER, smiling: "I'd be offended if you *didn't*, Ron."

ME: "I promise you, we *don't*."

This is pretty much true. We *mention* her, of course we do. Hermione says this. Hermione says that. Hermione will kill me when she finds out. That kind of thing. But we never sit around in the dorm like she obviously imagines we do, talking about her. What she's like. Harry isn't really the sort of bloke to talk about people behind their back, and obviously I don't exactly want to bring up the subject. So I say, trying to shut off this particular conversation and expecting the answer to be *No*, "Why, do you two talk about me when I'm not there?"

HER: "Of course we do."

ME, slightly taken aback: "Oh. Okay. What do you say?"

HER: "I'm *joking*, Ron. I know I don't joke very often, but I did think you of all people might have been able to tell."

ME: "Yeah, sorry. I'm not feeling very funny at the moment. I keep thinking about Harry. Should I go and ask him if he fancies a game of chess or something?"

HER: "Yes, being resolutely beaten by you should cheer him up no end."

ME: "What?"

HER: "Oh, for God's sake. I'm *joking*!"

So I go and find Harry, and he pretends he was asleep, and I pretend I believe him, and everything's fine again. Well, as fine as it can be, anyway. He nearly beats me too, and I nearly let him. And it's great, it's just the three of us having a laugh and taking the piss out of each other and not thinking at all about the awful thing that happened.

Aug 18th

I'm sitting in the back garden this afternoon reading a magazine when Bill wanders out from the kitchen with two cold bottles of *actual beer* - yay, Bill! - and comes and sits down next to me.

BILL, handing me one: "Don't tell Mum."

ME: "Don't worry, I won't. Where did you get these?"

BILL: "Pub in the village, but don't go getting any ideas."

ME: "But that's a Muggle pub, where did you get the money?"

BILL, dryly: "I work in a *bank*, Ron."

ME, going red: "Oh. Yeah."

BILL: "So, Mum said you wanted to ask me something?"

ME: "No."

BILL, frowning: "Oh. Okay, then." He starts to get up again.

ME: "Oh, wait! I'm supposed to ask you for careers advice! Sorry, it's just Mum, you know what she's like..."

Bill laughs. "Yeah. I know. Ask away, then. Although I'm not sure what kind of advice I'll be able to give you. I mean, did you *want* to work for Gringotts?"

ME: "Not particularly."

BILL: "Well, have you got any idea what you *do* want to do?"

ME: "I wanted to be an Auror but I failed Potions so now I can't."

BILL: "Well, that's a shame. That would be a great job. Scary. But great. Although you do realise there's no way on earth Mum would have let you, don't you?"

ME, annoyed: "Why not? Because I'm not *good* enough, I suppose?"

BILL, patiently, like he's explaining something obvious to a small child: "No. Because it's *insanely dangerous*. Can you imagine her letting her youngest son swan around the country chasing Death Eaters? After everything you've already been through with Harry? You give her more grey hairs than the rest of us put together, you know. You *and* Ginny. Especially after what happened at the Ministry. Don't you think she's got enough to worry about already without you deliberately putting yourself in even more danger?"

I feel horribly guilty straight away. I hadn't thought about that at all. I thought she was just trying to put me off because she thought I didn't have a chance of passing the entrance exams.

ME: "Oh. Yeah. S'pose."

BILL, obviously trying to cheer me up: "Mind you, Percy's got probably the safest job in the world and hardly leaves his desk and she never stops crying about what if anything happened to him and we weren't talking." He sighs. "Anyway, I don't want to talk about Percy. Listen, Ron, just tell her you want to work in an office. It's not worth the hassle. If you still want to be an Auror in two years time... well, you probably won't by then."

ME: "I *will*!"

BILL: "Two years is a long time. A lot can happen. *Will* happen. There's a war on, in case you hadn't noticed. Just - keep her sweet. She lost both her brothers in the last war, she's got a husband and six sons who are all of age to fight in this one - well, nearly six - so you can't blame her for worrying, can you? Try not to give her too much of a hard time about it."

ME, properly ashamed: "I didn't think."

BILL, doing a scarily accurate impression of Mum: "That's your trouble, young man, you just don't *think!*"

ME: "I feel like a total arsehole now."

BILL, laughing: "Well, that would be because you *are*, RonNah, look, I know it's a pain when she goes off on one of her nagging fits. She's not exactly my favourite person at the moment either-"

ME, shocked, "Isn't she? Why?"

BILL, lowering his voice: "In case you hadn't noticed, she's not exactly been giving Fleur an easy time of it lately. I could do without it, to be honest. Dad's been fine, Charlie's been fine, all the men in this family have been no problem-"

ME, sarcastically, "Hmm, I wonder why *that* is..."

Bill laughs. "Yeah, fair point. But it doesn't make it any easier. I'm supposed to be getting married next year, I don't need the hassle." He sighs loudly. "Right, is this the end of our careers session or have you got anything else you want to ask me?"

ME: "Yeah, how the hell did someone like *you* manage to pull someone like *Fleur*?"

BILL: "It's my natural animal magnetism, you cheeky little git. And the hair. She *loves* the hair..."

ME: "Well, who wouldn't?"

BILL: "Exactly. Come on, any *serious* questions?"

ME, without thinking: "Yeah, how old were you when you, *you know?*"

Bill starts laughing. "When I *what?*"

ME, going red: "Oh, forget it, if you're just gonna take the piss out of me!"

BILL: "Sorry, you just caught me off guard there. Um... Why, are you thinking about it?"

I just give him a hard stare.

BILL: "Of course you are. Silly me. Okay. I was seventeen. So you've still got about six months on me."

ME: "Yeah, like that'll happen."

BILL: "You never know."

ME: "I think I can probably take a wild guess."

BILL, chuckling: "Did Dad give you *the talk* yet?"

ME: "Oh, God. Yeah, last week, actually."

BILL: "Last week! Blimey, he's really leaving it late these days, isn't he?"

ME: "Why, how old were you?"

BILL: "Twelve. And I had no idea what he was talking about and he made it sound so grim it totally put me off for ages."

We both fall about laughing.

BILL, recovering himself: "I think Dad realised I was a bit too young for *the talk*, so he's been putting it off 'til later and later ever since, and that's why he waited 'til you were - Jesus! - sixteen. Poor Dad, I've never seen him so embarrassed in my life. Still, just be glad you're not Charlie."

ME: "Why?"

BILL, hardly able to speak, he's laughing so much: "Because Charlie... haha... got... hahaha... *diagrams*...."

We both laugh so much at the thought of poor Charlie and what he must have gone through that Bill nearly chokes on his beer, and I get a stitch and have to go back in the house to recover. That was a good conversation, though. I feel much better about everything now. Well, worse, because I feel guilty about Mum. But better, because I know what I'm going

to do. I'll just tell her I want to work at the Ministry. I mean, it's two years away, that should be plenty of time for me to work out what I actually want to do. She probably won't even remember. And maybe by then they'll be so desperate for people to help fight You-Know-Who they'll lower their entry standards and let anybody join. Even me, with my *one* NEWT, or whatever I end up getting. Yeah, that's what I'll do, I'll lie. It's really only a white lie, anyway. Like Bill says, she's got enough to worry about already. And it is *sort* of true. I mean, the Aurors' Office *is* based at the Ministry. Yeah. That's what I'll tell her. Good old Bill. Although I'm sure that wasn't really what she had in mind when she told me I should ask him for advice!

Aug 19th

I've been sitting out in the garden with Hermione again tonight, just the two of us not talking about anything in particular, it was nice. Once the sun's gone down it's nice and cool out there, especially if it's a clear night like it was tonight. A plane went over at one point and I wondered aloud where it was going and she said it was probably coming from Exeter or Plymouth and going to Gatwick or Southampton. Me: "Ooh, *Gatwick*, exciting!" Her: "It *is* exciting, actually, you can get anywhere in the world from *Gatwick*." Me: "You can get anywhere in the world on the Floo Network from my mum's fireplace." Her: "Alright, clever-clogs!" We sit there in silence watching the sky for a while, and then she says, "Where would you go, if you could?" "Dunno. Somewhere not hot." She laughs. "Alaska?" "Is it cold?" "Yes, it's up near the Arctic Circle." "That'll do." She starts laughing again, so I ask her what's so funny and she says she's just imagining how much complaining I must have done when we went to Egypt. She's right, of course. She's always right. Me, grinning: "I'll have you know I didn't complain about the heat more than once -" "Rubbish!" " - a minute..." She slaps my arm. "Idiot." We stare at the sky some more. "Where would you go, if you could go anywhere?" She doesn't hesitate for a second. "Paris." Me: "I thought you'd already been to France?" She says, yes, but not to Paris, and anyway she'd like to go without her parents, so she could go anywhere, do anything she wanted. Which apparently would mainly involve visiting a load of museums. Her, dreamily: "It's supposed to be the most romantic city in the *world*..." I make gagging noises and she shakes her head. "God, you're such a *boy*!" "Mm, *museums*... does it for me..." "Oh, shut up!"

We watch as another plane goes over. Me: "You wouldn't catch me going up in one of those things. It doesn't look safe." She stares at me. "Ron... you've been fifty foot in the air on a broomstick..." "Yeah, but -" She starts laughing. "You've travelled by *Floo Powder*!" "It's not the same -" "You've

driven a flying car!" I'm trying to be annoyed with her but it's impossible. "You've ridden an *invisible horse!*" She's practically helpless with laughter now. "Yeah, but I know how those things work, don't I? They work by magic. But how does something that big stay up *without* magic? It's mad!" She stops laughing, with a massive effort. "Actually, I'm not sure. Something to do with air currents and engines, I think. I don't know." Me, pretending to call into the house: "Hey, Harry! Send an owl to the Daily Prophet! There's something Hermione doesn't know!" Her: "Shut up! There are lots of things I don't know, actually!"

I never get to find out what they are though, because just then there's a definite movement in the trees ten feet in front of us and we both jump to our feet. Neither of us have got our wands with us, which is pretty stupid, but since we're not supposed to use them outside of school, why the hell would we? She grabs my arm and we just stand there frozen waiting for what I'm sure we both think are a gang of Death Eaters about to burst out of the bushes and kill us. I know they say your life's supposed to flash before your eyes when you know you're going to die, but all I kept thinking was; if I'd known it was my last meal I'd have had a second helping of pudding. Later, I thought; if I had ten seconds to live I'd *tell* her, but actually, I probably wouldn't. I'd probably just chicken out, even then. Anyway, I'm not sure that ten seconds would have been long enough. "Hermione... I... er... I sort of... um... well... it's like this... I mean... er..." Of course the killing curse is pretty much instant, so I wouldn't even have had that long: "*Herm - aarghhhhh!!!*"

Oh, yeah, and it wasn't Death Eaters, it was Fred and George, coming round to collect some boxes they needed for the shop. Good thing I didn't say anything, eh? It would have been embarrassing enough without those two taking the piss out of me about it for the rest of my natural life. I had a really lucky escape, actually. They cornered me in the kitchen and asked if it was true that Dad had finally given me *the talk*. Apparently him waiting 'til I was sixteen is like the funniest thing ever - thanks, Bill - and they want to know if I had any questions. "Because we had *loads*, didn't we, George?" "Yeah, you wanted to know if it was true that too much masturbation makes you go blind..." "And you wanted to know how small is *too small*..." They both fall about laughing. "So, did you have any questions, ickle Ronnie?" Me: "Fuck off." Fred, pretending to be hurt and not fooling anyone: "Ooh, *not* very nice! We were only asking." George: "Yeah, we were just trying to help. I mean, if there was something you couldn't ask Dad, you could always ask *us*..." Me, sarcastically: "Yeah, with all your vast experience of girls!" Fred, even more sarcastically: "Because, obviously, you'd be the first person we'd tell." George: "Come on, baby bro',

you must have some questions for us!" Cue Hermione with the milk jug, with perfect timing: "Questions about what?" F & G exchange looks, and I get a horrible sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. For about three seconds I'm sure they're gonna rip the piss out of me in front of her, but for some reason, they don't. Fred: "What about those boxes, George?" George: "Yep, those boxes won't carry themselves." Her, when they've gone: "What was *that* all about?" Me, incredibly relieved: "Oh, nothing..."

Aug 21st

Oh my God, *last night!* It was a really hot night again and because my bedroom's at the top of the house it's always even hotter in there. So I can't sleep and I get up in the middle of the night and go downstairs to the kitchen to get a drink of water, and when I'm coming back upstairs, I bump into Hermione coming out of the loo. She's only wearing knickers and a vest. *I'm* only wearing boxer shorts and a t-shirt. It's a good thing the only light's coming from our wands, if you know what I mean. And apart from that I know I have gone beetroot and I am pretty sure my mouth is hanging open. I have to physically force myself not to look below her neck, but I can't look her in the eye either, so I end up talking to somewhere about a foot above her head. I say, stupidly, "Oh, hello." She says, "It's hot, isn't it?" I say, stupidly, "Yeah." She says, "Well..." We both go for the stairs at the same time. I say, "After you." She says, "No, after you." I say, "No, after you" again. We stand there not moving. I suddenly realise she doesn't want to go up first in case I look at her arse. So then I have to go up first and even though I don't think she's going to be looking at *my* arse, I suddenly get really self-conscious and am horribly aware of all my limbs. When we get to the landing outside Ginny's room I don't even stop, I just leg it up the stairs to my room and say "Night!" over my shoulder and don't look back. Bloody hell! That's an image that's burned into my retinas for ever, I can tell you! I haven't been able to bring myself to go downstairs yet today, and it's nearly two o'clock already. I'm pretending to still be asleep. It definitely helps when you have the reputation of being able to sleep for England, although I'm sure it's blatantly obvious that I'm avoiding her. To her, anyway. Oh God oh God oh God oh God oh God!

Later: so eventually, I get up and get dressed and go downstairs and thank Christ, she's gone for a walk with Ginny, although this means putting off the embarrassing moment even further. When she comes back everyone is sitting in the kitchen getting dinner ready, so at least I can *not* look at her without it being really obvious. Then Fred says, really loudly as usual and in front of everybody, "I see you were up in the night, Ron!" And I totally freeze up, but he says, "Or did a gnome sneak in here and eat my last

chocolate frog?" I'm so relieved that I talk nineteen to the dozen about complete nonsense for the rest of the day. Turns out Ginny ate the chocolate frog, by the way.

SEPTEMBER

Sept 1st

First day back at school. Sorry I haven't written in this for a while. I did warn you I wasn't a diary sort of bloke! Anyway, now the holidays are over I'm sure there'll be plenty of stuff to write about. Like that wanker Malfoy, for one. Me and Hermione went past his carriage on the train today and he made some nasty little comment about her as usual. I would have gone in there and hit him if she hadn't grabbed my arm. She always seems to be able to rise above it somehow. She's obviously a better person than me. I'd just lamp him. If I could just get him on his own in a dark corridor! Me and you, Malfoy, and a big fucking hammer. Actually, I don't even need the hammer. I could just beat him to death with his own shoe. Or my shoe. Actually, I don't even need the shoe. Me, you, my fist, your face!

There's a new teacher as well, Professor Slughorn. He looks like a walrus. He had this little party on the train for people he thought were particularly brilliant. So that was Harry of course, and for some reason Neville and Ginny, of all people. When did Ginny suddenly become a genius? You've got to admit, it's pretty embarrassing being stupider than your own little sister. Looks like I am now officially the stupidest person in my whole family. Yay for me! I was kind of surprised Hermione wasn't invited, to be honest, but she didn't say anything, so I didn't mention it. I just sat there and stared out of the window and watched her reflection in the glass like the muppet I am. I like watching her reading. She chews her lip when she's concentrating and I don't think she realises she's doing it. I'm sure if anyone watched *me* reading I'd just look like a monkey.

Sept 2nd

Had a brief moment of excitement today when I saw how many free periods we get now we're NEWT students, but that vanished as soon as I realised how much harder the work is going to be and how much extra bloody homework we're gonna get. First Transfiguration lesson was a bit of a nightmare. McGonagall might as well have been talking French for all the sense it made to me. Then Snape set us a really long essay - on the first day! I can't *believe* they gave him the job. He's going to be really smug about it too, he's been after it for ages. I really hope he goes the way of all our other Defence teachers and only lasts a year. With any luck he'll be eaten by trolls or something. Git.

Sept 3rd

Seamus was just up here talking about girls. Dean was here as well at first, but I suppose now he's going out with Ginny, he obviously thinks he can't talk about that stuff in front of me anymore, so he buggered off quickly when he saw me come in. Must have a guilty conscience. I can't believe Ginny's going out with Dean now, it's really embarrassing. I have to share a room with him and I don't want to know or hear or even have to think about what he's up to with my little sister. Why can't she go out with someone in her own year? Or at least someone I don't know. She went to the ball with Neville that time as well, and she used to fancy Harry, what's she trying to do, collect the set? There's only Seamus left! Dean hardly talks to me anymore, you can tell he doesn't want to catch my eye. Because obviously, I can pretty much guess what he's thinking about Ginny because it's probably the same sort of thing I think about *her*. If Dean even thinks half the things I do...

Anyway, Seamus was talking about which girls in our year have "filled out" over the summer. Susan Bones, for instance. He's not wrong there. Jesus. I mean, obviously I'm usually more than happy to have this kind of conversation, but today I was just unbelievably tense the whole time because I was sure Seamus was going to say something about Hermione and then I'd have to hit him. And that would just be a really bad idea on so many levels. Seamus was on a roll, unfortunately. He asked me who I fancy in our year. I told him I didn't particularly fancy anyone but he wasn't buying it. He said, "Hannah Abbott's looking pretty good these days, isn't she?" I said I supposed Hannah was alright. He said, "What about Lavender?" I said I'd never really thought about it. He said, "Nice tits!" and did a little mime and we both laughed, me probably a bit too loudly because I was so fucking wound up. I said, "Did you see Malfoy's going out with Pansy Parkinson? I'm not sure who I feel more sorry for." He laughed at that, thank Christ, and I managed to steer the conversation round to slagging off Malfoy instead.

Sept 4th

Had a particularly Ron day today. Managed to make myself look an idiot in front of her in two different lessons. No idea what I'm doing as usual. In Potions mine was the only one that looked and smelled like someone had puked in it. Slughorn didn't even look at it, he just held his breath when he went past me. I spent the rest of the day smelling slightly like vomit. So classy! That's the way to get the girls to notice you, Weasley! And then Snape had a go at me as well and I was so fed up I couldn't even be bothered to answer him back. And *she* looked round at me and gave me this sympathetic little grin. She must really feel sorry for me. I am such a

spanner! What's the point in even taking my NEWTs anyway? I've got no clue what I'm doing, I'm bottom of the class in pretty much everything, there's no way on earth they're going to let me be an Auror. At this rate I'll be lucky to be a tea boy at the Ministry of Magic.

Sept 5th

Woke up this morning and bloody Crookshanks was sitting on the end of my bed staring at me. Frightened the life out of me. Her cat hates me. It's because we're both ginger, I reckon. He thinks I'm his enemy! Little sod never misses the chance to scratch me. I pull faces at him when she's not looking. I like mouthing things at him knowing he can't reply. "Die, you orange bastard!", that kind of thing. I'm sure he knows exactly what I'm saying. He just looks at me with contempt. Mind you, he gets to sit in her lap, so he always wins, and he knows it too. Nasty little furball. Sometimes he'll be sitting there and she's stroking him and he's purring really loudly, obviously really enjoying it, and looking straight at me as if to say "Never gonna happen, kid. Never gonna happen..."

Sept 6th

It's about half six. I woke up and the first thing I thought about was her. Actually, it was like I woke up in the middle of the thought, do you know what I mean? Like I'd already been thinking about her, even though I was asleep. It's like it's my default setting: thinking about Hermione. I might think about other things for a bit - Quidditch, jokes, Potions essays, breakfast, what an arsehole Malfoy is - but as soon as I stop thinking about them, my mind switches back into thinking about Hermione again. Jesus, Ron, you really need to sort yourself out, mate. Get a grip!

Sept 7th

I seem to have this brilliant knack of making myself look like an idiot in front of her. We were walking between lessons earlier and I suddenly tripped over my own feet and fell up the stairs. And she looked round at me and laughed! I don't think I could have looked less cool if I tried. And as if that wasn't bad enough, everything in my bag fell out as well and I got ink all over my trousers *and* managed to put my knee in a chocolate frog. She laughed for ages at that one. She was still laughing about it tonight. Great. Hilarious! And then, this afternoon, bloody Snape read out my last essay in front of the whole class and pointed out every little thing I'd got wrong. All the Slytherin lot laughed as usual. And the worst thing was, he read it out, and then he asked, "Can anyone tell Mr. Weasley what the correct answer

should have been?" and she put her hand up! I gave her a filthy look and she did at least have the grace to look ashamed. It's bad enough being this thick without her rubbing it in.

Sept 8th

This is *great!* Harry had his first private lesson with Dumbledore tonight, so that meant I got her all to myself for the whole evening! Nothing happened - (*Obviously;* what was I gonna do, lurch at her in the middle of the common room?) - but I was just happy to be sitting there with her trying to make her laugh and sneaking looks at her over my textbook every five minutes. She kept telling me off for distracting her when she was supposed to be working: "That's not funny, Ron!" "Have you *finished* your essay?" "Stop trying to make me laugh!" I really like it when you can tell she obviously doesn't really mean it and you can see her struggling not to smile, so as not to give me the satisfaction. "Ron, you're not funny!" "Why are you smiling then?" "Oh, shut up!" I *love* that!

I really hope Harry has these lessons every week from now on. Most of the time she's probably just going to want to do homework like she did tonight, but maybe next time I can persuade her to go for a walk or something instead. Maybe if we spend a lot more time together where it's just the two of us, she might actually start to think of me as something more than just a friend. "Gosh, Ron, if it hadn't been for all these evenings we've spent alone together I might never have realised how incredibly attractive you are!" Yeah, this could be spectacular. Thanks, Harry! Thanks, Professor!

Sept 9th

This diary is proving a bit one-note, isn't it? God, anyone reading it would think I was totally obsessed or something! Honestly, things do happen that aren't about Hermione, I just don't feel the need to write them down. It's not like my problems are actually important, anyway. Not compared to the stuff Harry has to worry about. Oh, let's compare them, shall we? Being rubbish at Quidditch and fancying a girl who thinks I'm an idiot vs. having the world's most evil wizard want to see you dead. Hmm. I definitely think my problems are worse, don't you? So I suppose that's what this diary's for. Whining about stuff I can't talk to Harry or Hermione about. I can talk to them about most things. Obviously, I can't talk to either of them about her. How would *that* go?

ME: "Hey, Harry, I've been meaning to mention this for ages, but I really fancy Hermione."

HARRY: "Don't be thick, how can you fancy Hermione, she's our mate. Anyway, she's way out of your league."

ME: "Hey, Hermione, I've been meaning to mention this for ages, but I really fancy you."

HER: "Sorry, Ron, I only like you as a friend. Anyway, I'm way out of your league."

Well, she wouldn't say that, but it's true. She might *think* it. Basically, there's no possible way me telling either of them wouldn't end in complete disaster. So yeah, this diary is a bit one-note, but that's the whole point. It's *about* her. All the stories are always about a girl anyway, aren't they? Boy meets girl, blah blah blah. Boy meets girl, boy takes five years to realise he fancies girl, girl only likes boy as a friend, boy goes slowly nuts, the end. It's exactly like the stories! Yeah, because the hero's always a ginger idiot, isn't he?

Sept 10th

Just realised if anyone ever found this and read it, I'd have to kill myself, so I've put a spell on it to go blank every time I've finished writing in it. Now if I could just put a spell on myself to make me not fancy her anymore. Not that she couldn't work out how to read it in about a second, of course. Hey, Hermione, if you're reading this, I'm just kidding!

Sept 11th

We're all downstairs in the common room tonight and Hermione's got Crookshanks on her lap. At one point I get up to go to the loo and when I come back the little sod's under my chair, which I only realise when I stand on him. There's this horrible yowling and he does a couple of mad circuits of the room drawing attention to himself as usual. She shouts at me, "You idiot, Ron, watch where you're putting your enormous feet, can't you?" I say, "Sorry, it was an accident." She says, "You've never liked him, have you?" I say, "Come on, it's not like I did it on purpose! Anyway, it's him that doesn't like me!" She says, accusingly, "Look at his tail!" She picks him up - he's mewing all pathetically - and shows me his somewhat limp and bent-looking tail. For some reason this makes me laugh, which is a mistake, to say the least. She says, "Oh, you think it's funny, do you?" How would you like if it I stood on *your* tail?" I say, "Well, if I *had* a tail, I probably wouldn't be that keen." Harry laughs out loud. That doesn't help either. She says, "You don't have to make fun of me!" I say, "I wasn't! It was only an

accident, you're over-reacting!" She shouts, "I'm over-reacting? Fine! *Fine!* How's this for over-reacting?" And she picks up the nearest thing, which is my half-drunk cup of tea - I automatically throw my arms up to defend myself - but she just takes a sip from it instead. I say, almost laughing with relief, "For a minute there I thought you were going to throw that at me!" She looks at me. "I was. I was just checking it wasn't hot first." "And?" "It isn't." I manage to close my eyes about half a second before I get a faceful of cold tea. There are some cheers and applause from the room. I make a small, sarcastic bow. She storms off to her room with Crookshanks in her arms. Harry says, "Well done, Ron. I thought you handled that really well." He starts laughing. I start laughing as well. Within about ten seconds it is the funniest thing that has ever happened, which is unfortunate because Hermione has forgotten her bag and comes back in to get it in a big huff, only to find the both of us apparently cracking up at the plight of her poor squashed cat. She doesn't come out of her room for the rest of the evening. It was pretty fucking funny, though!

Sept 12th

Good day today. I went down to the Quidditch pitch before breakfast to try and get some practice in. Trials are in a couple of weeks and now that Harry's Captain it would be just mortifying if I'm so dreadful he has to chuck me off the team. Plus winning the cup last year was absolutely the best moment of my *life* and I definitely want some more of that, thank you very much! OK, some of it is wanting to actually be good at something for a change, but mostly it's wanting to be good at it in front of *her*. She didn't see me win last year, so it was a bit like... *Oh.* Thanks. I wanted to say to her, "What do you think I'm doing this *for*?" Anyway, based on this morning's performance I'm feeling pretty confident. I bewitched some apples to fly at me and managed to save fourteen in a row! Admittedly I've always been much better at it when there aren't several hundred people watching, but it's got to be a good sign, hasn't it? Maybe this is my year!

Anyway, that meant I was in a really good mood when I got in to breakfast and managed to make Hermione laugh so much she choked on toast crumbs and I had to thump her on the back. When she'd recovered she said, "Stop making me laugh, I'm trying to sulk with you!" I said, "You're trying to sulk with *me*? You're not the one who got a cup of cold tea in the face!" She picked up my tea and held it over my lap and said, "Sorry, you were saying...?" I said, "Aren't you going to check it's not hot first?" She said, "I know it's hot..." and laughed and put the cup down again. I drank it all quickly before she could change her mind. We were both on pretty good form for the rest of the day, actually. Flitwick had to tell us off for laughing

in Charms. Good thing it wasn't in Snape's lesson or I wouldn't be up here now writing this, I'd probably be cleaning the Slytherin toilets with a toothbrush or something. It was quite funny though; she never gets told off so I took the piss out of her for the rest of the day about it. "Was this the un-sensible thing you were going to do that was really going to surprise me? I mean, it's not bad, but to *really* surprise me I think you'd need to actually get detention..." I'd pay good money to see Hermione get detention. Mind you, she's such a teacher's pet I think they'd probably give *me* detention and just let her off with a warning. "Miss Granger, I'm really sorry to bother you, but would you mind terribly not talking in my lesson? Thanks awfully. Oh, and Mr. Weasley, if you distract Miss Granger again, you'll be in detention every night for the rest of your life. Yes, including when you've actually left school!" No point in protesting that *she* was the one distracting *me*, I suppose!

Sept 13th

The three of us are in the common room tonight and I'm stuffing my face with some chocolate cake I liberated from the dinner hall earlier. Harry stares at me and shakes his head and says, "Jesus, Ron, we only had tea an hour ago, where do you put it all?" She's sitting cross-legged on an armchair opposite and looks up from her book and says, "It obviously all just goes to his legs", which makes me laugh. She says, "How tall are you now, anyway?" I tell her, "Eight foot six" and they both laugh. She says, "Seriously though, how can you not know?" I say, "Um... because I don't care?" She says, "I swear, sometimes I think you've actually grown another inch overnight." I say quickly, "You swear? Surely not!" Harry laughs and says he'd pay good money to hear Hermione swear. I say, "Yeah, so would I, if I had any money. It would almost be worth robbing Gringotts for." She says, "Well, good luck to you, you'll have a long wait." I say to Harry, "Nah, I reckon if anyone can make Hermione swear, I can." He says, "You certainly drive *me* to it." I say, jokingly, "Fuck you!" and he says, "Fuck you, too!" and we both crack up. Hermione shakes her head. She says, "God, you're such *children*!" I say, pretend meekly, "Sorry, Professor." She snaps, "Just because I don't swear doesn't make me McGonagall, you know!" I say, "No, but calling us children does." Harry laughs and says, "Touche!" She says, "You're probably right, actually. If anyone can make me swear, Ron, you can. You're certainly *annoying* enough." I tell her, "Well, I do my best." and she laughs and says, "Oh, f - for Heaven's sake!" She has to shout to make herself heard over us laughing: "And that's the closest you're going to get, Ron, sorry!"

Sept 14th

Really rubbish day today. Got an owl back from Flourish & Blotts this morning, for a start. I sent them one last week because I need to order a new Potions textbook - me and Harry didn't think we'd got good enough grades in our OWLs to do Potions at NEWT level, but now Slughorn's taking Potions instead of Snape and he obviously doesn't mind slightly more stupid students in his class. So that's *good*, because you need a NEWT in Potions to be an Auror, but *bad*, because now I've got to spend money I haven't got on a sodding textbook. I was hoping they might still have some second-hand copies but of course since term's already started they've sold out. And new copies are, wait for it, NINE GALLEONS! *Nine!* I nearly cried when I got their letter this morning. I've only got ten Galleons in the first place, and I've been saving that all summer for Hermione's birthday present. I have *got* her something already, but I'm not sure if I actually want to give it to her. This was back-up in case I had a better idea or changed my mind. Anyway, now I haven't got any choice.

I mean, *nine Galleons!* On a Potions textbook! That's such a waste. Why can't I just keep the second-hand one from Slughorn's cupboard? I bet he wouldn't even miss it. Oh, and this is typical as well: me and Harry have been using old copies from the Potions cupboard for the last week, and Harry's has all those notes scrawled all over it, which turn out to have been written by some sort of Potions genius who calls himself the Half-Blood Prince. Sounds like a right stuck-up git, if you ask me. Anyway, that means Harry's top of the class in Potions all of a sudden. It's absolutely killing Hermione, she's used to being top at everything, and she hates losing. She gets that same oh-well-played-but-secretly-I'm-furious look she does when I beat her at chess. Which is every time, ha ha. Of course the book *I* got doesn't have handy tips in it, oh no, *mine* just looks like someone threw up over it. Still, I suppose he'll have to give it back when he gets his new copy anyway, then he'll be just as crap as I am again. Aargh, I still can't believe it, nine Galleons! *NINE!*

It's not like there aren't a million other things I could spend the money on either. New clothes, for one. I put my jacket on this morning for the first time in months, and when I put my hands in the pockets they went straight through the lining. I don't even particularly *like* the sodding jacket - it used to be Charlie's, so it's never fitted me properly - but now it's completely falling apart. Everything's falling apart. I had to put a stretching spell on my school shoes the other day as well. There's no point in even asking mum if she can buy me new ones. Just like there was no point in asking her for the money for my Potions textbook, and just like there's no point asking for a new coat. There's never any fucking point. You know, if it wasn't for Hermione and Harry I think I'd seriously consider doing a Fred & George

and leaving school early so I can get a job. It's not like I'm actually going to get good enough grades to be an Auror anyway. Might as well leave now and at least start earning some money. 'Cos that's totally the way to impress the smartest girl in school, isn't it? Drop out! Still, she should be grateful, at least that way she'd actually get a decent Christmas present. At this rate she'll be lucky to even get a card out of me.

Sept 15th

Oh fuck, I nearly hit Seamus today! I'm starting to wish I had actually, he was really asking for it, winding me up on purpose. He can be a real shit-stirrer sometimes. We are in the corridor between lessons this afternoon and he's telling me about this girl he met on holiday. Seamus is bloody obsessed. He's even worse than me, and that's saying something. Anyway, he's going into fairly disgusting detail about what he got up to, and we're both laughing when suddenly he stops dead mid-sentence and I realise Hermione has come up behind me. She says, "What are you laughing about?" I say "Nothing", and feel guilty for some reason, although I don't know why I should feel guilty when it's Seamus who's telling the story. She stands there beaming, and Seamus says, "We're talking about girls." She stops smiling and looks really embarrassed. I think, "Oh, brilliant." She says, "Oh. Okay. Um... see you later, then." and practically runs off. I say to Seamus, "Did you have to say that?" He says, "What? We were talking about girls. You didn't want to have that conversation in front of her, did you?" I say, "Well, no..." He says, "Oh, I forgot, you fancy her, don't you?" I feel like I've been dunked in ice. I go, "What?" He says, "Oh, come on!" I say, "No. Fuck off!" He says, "Whatever you say." I start to get really annoyed. I say, "We're just friends. You don't know what you're talking about." "Oh, right, is that why you've gone bright red then?" "No, that's because I'm pissed off." "If you don't fancy her, what are you so pissed off for?" "Because you're talking bollocks." "Well, alright, if you *don't* fancy her, you won't mind if I ask her out, will you?"

I manage to croak, "What?" He bursts out laughing. "Oh my God, your face! I was just joking, but you really *do* fancy her, don't you? Ha ha ha ha ha!" *Bastard*. Before I even know what I'm doing I've pushed him against the wall and hear myself threatening to break his teeth. He holds his hands up in defence and starts protesting that he was just winding me up, and he didn't mean it, and can't I take a joke, but I'm so fucking angry I'm not listening, I can just hear the blood rushing in my ears. And then I realise I've totally lost it, and let go of him and step backwards, and a load of third year kids all scatter out of my way. He shouts, "You've gone mental!" I tell him to stay away from me, and leg it as fast as I can to the nearest

bathroom where I lock myself in a cubicle and punch the wall a few times and then realise that I'm actually shaking! I haven't seen him yet tonight. I'm going to take a mad guess that he's keeping the hell out of my way. Good idea. The worst thing is I actually bumped into her when I got back to the common room and of course I didn't want to talk to her, and she made it worse by asking if I was alright. And I snapped, "Fine!" and then she obviously thought I was annoyed with her, because she shouted after me, "What have I done now? Oh, did I interrupt your little *talk*, is that what you're sulking about? That's really pathetic!" I said, "Great, thanks!" and tried to slam the door in her face, only these old doors don't really slam, they just creak slowly shut, so that didn't really work. It was a fantastic day all round, really. I don't feel quite so angry as I did earlier, I just feel like an idiot. The last thing I need is Seamus knowing about it. What if he says something? What if he tells Dean, and Dean tells Ginny? What if he says something in front of Harry? Shit, I really don't need this.

Sept 16th

Seamus has been avoiding me today. He doesn't seem to have said anything, thank Christ. He probably knows that if he did I really would break his teeth. Apart from that, everything's been much the same. I haven't punched anybody, anyway!

Sept 17th

We were in Herbology this afternoon and she spilt a load of earth on the floor, and as she bent down next to me to pick it up I got this, oh my God, half-second look down her shirt, and I got embarrassed and looked away really quickly, and bloody Seamus caught my eye and grinned at me and gave me the thumbs up. I don't think I've ever gone so red in my life. Which is saying something! I might have to have a word. If he says anything... Jesus, I don't even want to think about it.

Sept 18th

It's Hermione's birthday tomorrow. I am really nervous about giving her her present. Mum cornered me in the holidays and asked me if I'd got her anything and I said no, and I'd no idea what to get because she's coming of age this year so I couldn't really just get a book, it had to be something really good. Anyway, Mum said she'd been looking through some old family stuff with Ginny and they'd found something they thought Hermione might like. She said if I didn't think it was suitable or I wanted to get her something else, that was fine. And she showed me this really old looking

engraved silver bracelet that once belonged to my Great-Aunt Mildred. It's like a hundred years old or something. I mean, obviously I know nothing about that kind of thing, but it does look really nice. I asked didn't Ginny want it and she said no, it was Ginny's idea in the first place. So I was really chuffed because I'd no idea what I was going to get her. But I've been thinking about it since and worrying that maybe giving her jewellery might be taken the wrong way. Well, the right way. The wrong way. Either way is the wrong way. Is it too personal? Should I have just got her a nice book instead? What if she doesn't like it after all? What if she thinks I'm cheap because I got her a second-hand present? What will Harry think? Will it be a dead giveaway? What if she gets really embarrassed? What if I get really embarrassed? Oh, sod it. It's tomorrow. What else can I get her in time? With ONE Galleon... Maybe I'll ask Ginny. It was her idea after all. They're friends. Surely she'd know whether Hermione would like it or not. No, I won't say anything. It's too late now, and anyway I don't want Ginny knowing I'm worried about it. I'd never hear the last of it. Oh, I don't know!

Sept 19th

OH MY FUCKING GOD!!! She liked the bracelet! And - wait for it - I got a KISS as well! Just on the cheek, but hey, I'm grateful for what I can get! Woo-hoo! I rule! It was kind of hard to give it to her, actually. I wanted to give it to her on my own, but there were always loads of people around, so eventually I had to tell her I needed to see her outside in the corridor and gave it to her there. I was totally mortified though. I just said, "I hope you like it 'cos I can't take it back," which was a bit of a rubbish thing to say, but when she unwrapped it she looked really surprised and pleased. I told her it belonged to my Great-Aunt and she asked didn't my mum or Ginny want it. It was on the tip of my tongue to say, actually, it was their idea in the first place, but somehow I didn't think it would be a good idea to mention that. Anyway, she said she really loved it and she gave me a really awkward hug and kissed me on the cheek!!!! And I blushed something chronic and got really hot and embarrassed and made some idiotic excuse to go back in the common room. But I'll be living off that kiss for weeks! And the hug, my God! really had to struggle to keep my arms down by my sides. She was pressed right against me for about two seconds and they were the longest two seconds of my life! In a good way, of course. A very, very, very good way! I pretty much bounced on air for the rest of the day. Ginny came up to me later and said, "Hermione really loved the bracelet, well done." and I said, "Well, it was your idea, it wasn't anything to do with me," and she looked alarmed and said, "For God's sake don't tell her that!" Like I would. Even I'm not that stupid. Especially if there's a chance I might get another kiss! I can't stop grinning!

Sept 20th

I've just been staring at her like an idiot all day today. I keep thinking about what it might be like to kiss her. Yeah, I know, never gonna happen. Didn't stop me daydreaming about it all through lessons. Snape deducted ten points from Gryffindor because I clearly wasn't paying attention. He threw a book at my head and said, in front of everybody, "Mr. Weasley obviously thinks he already knows this subject, or he wouldn't be staring off into space with such a vacant and gormless expression, would he?" All the Slytherin lot laughed. One of them said, "No, sir, that's just his natural expression!" and everyone laughed even louder. Then she patted my arm and whispered, "Ignore them" and that made me feel a million times better suddenly. God, she's wonderful!

Sept 21st

Oh God. We were in the common room earlier doing our homework and Hermione was sitting by the fire and she got these red blotches on her legs where she was sitting too close. And at one point I suddenly realised she was watching me and I'd just been staring at her legs for, oh, probably days. She shouldn't go about kissing people if she doesn't want them to get ideas! Anyway, we both got really embarrassed and looked away quickly and she started talking to Harry about something else and couldn't look me in the eye for the rest of the evening. Good one, Ron.

Sept 22nd

I seem to have really lost it. All I do all day is gape at her like a mental case. I was supposed to be writing an essay for Charms tonight but I couldn't concentrate at all because she was sitting opposite me chewing the end of her quill. It's like, sometimes I sort of fall into a daydream in class and I wake up and realise I've been staring at her elbow for ten minutes. Or the shape of her bra across her back under her shirt. That last one happened in Potions yesterday and I only snapped out of it when Slughorn came round to look at everyone's work and noticed I hadn't got any further than get my cauldron out of the cupboard. I'm sure he'd probably have given me detention if he could actually remember my fucking name.

Sept 23rd

People are being murdered every day out there and all I can think about is her. She was going through the Daily Prophet this afternoon to see if

anyone we know has been killed or arrested, and I was standing behind her reading it over her shoulder and I sort of, um, looked down her top. Oh, fuck off! I know it's wrong, but I don't care! She once told me I had, and I quote, "the emotional range of a teaspoon". Ha ha! That was a couple of years ago, and if anything, I reckon I've actually got *more* shallow since then. At least I used to be able to talk to her without staring at her tits!

Sept 24th

Jesus, today was epically embarrassing! We were sitting in the common room this morning waiting for Harry, and I was hot so I took off my jumper only I pulled my t-shirt nearly over my head as well, and then I got embarrassed and panicked and got trapped in it and that just made it worse. And when I finally emerged I felt like my face was on fire and I saw Hermione was looking at me, and she gave me this embarrassed grin and looked away really quickly and hid her head in her book. Brilliant. Obviously she thinks I am mentally retarded or something. And at lunch she sat down between me and Harry, only she accidentally sat on my leg. We both said sorry about eighty million times. And then tonight she dropped her quill and bent down to pick it up and the back of her tshirt rode up a couple of inches. It was like, two seconds, but oh my God! When she'd straightened up again she said something to me and I had no idea what she was saying, it was like I'd gone temporarily deaf. She said, "For heaven's sake, Ron, pay attention!" I said sorry again. I seem to spend a lot of time apologising. And I thought: I *do* pay attention, just to the wrong things. She must know. She *must*. I'm sure I'm really fucking obvious. I'm a rubbish liar and I go red at the drop of a hat. Or a quill, ha ha!

Sept 25th

I must be mental. I am so deluding myself. She doesn't fancy me and is never going to fancy me in a million years. Oh God, it makes me cringe just thinking about this. We were in the common room this afternoon talking about how she got the tiny C-shaped scar on her knee and she said she did it when she was eight, roller blading. It's like a Muggle sport where you wear these special boots with wheels on. She got them for her eighth birthday and went round in them all the time for about six months, she really loved it but she was always rubbish and kept falling over. She got the scar (which is really cute, by the way) when she accidentally rolled into some other kid on a bike and the pedal went into her knee. The thing is, while she is telling me this I reach my hand out to touch the scar and she practically jerks her leg away. We both go really red. She says sorry, I say sorry, she says sorry again. She looks really embarrassed. Obviously, the

idea of me touching her leg is completely repulsive to her. What are you *doing*, Weasley? Did you really think anything was ever going to happen between someone like her and someone like you? She knows everything about everything and I know nothing about nothing. Except her. I know a million things about her. It's like my brain is full up with stuff about her and there's no room for anything else. There's definitely no room for Potions homework! I think I probably know more about her than I know about my own brothers. More than I know about myself, even.

Things I know about Hermione:

She has brown eyes the colour of conkers. She chews her lip when she's concentrating. She's always dreamed of going to Paris. She has a tiny scar on her knee from a roller-blading accident when she was eight. She hates her hair. Her favourite food is roast chicken. She sometimes hums to herself when she thinks she's on her own. She gets dry elbows. Her favourite word is "aspidistra". She doesn't like snails. It's the crunchy slimy sound they make when you tread on them. She had an imaginary friend when she was about four, it was a large blue hippo called Hoppy. She likes the whole elaborate process of eating oranges. Her favourite smell is newly mown grass. She loves opening a brand new book and writing her name in the front really carefully. She likes collecting small stones from places she's been to. She'd love to learn how to sail. She hates it when the tags on her clothes itch and always cuts them out straight away. She used to have a pet hamster called Bob, but he escaped. She wishes she were prettier. She doesn't need to. She likes to go camping. She used to make up little dance routines when she was little and perform them at Christmas for her mum and dad. Her favourite colour is blue. She was never allowed sweets when she was growing up because her parents were both dentists. She likes cooking Christmas dinner every year with her mum but her Yorkshire puddings always collapse. When she was little she wanted to be a librarian or a nurse. She loves it when it snows. She likes having an unusual name but she gets fed up when people can't be bothered to learn how to pronounce it properly. For the record: Her-my-oh-knee. It's not hard, is it? She used to be in something called the Brownies; it's like a club for girls where they get badges for learning stuff, so you can see why she'd like it! Her favourite animal is an otter. She is the best in class at *everything*. The thing she'd save first in a fire is a china teacup that once belonged to her gran. She hopes she'll get a couple of inches taller before she stops growing. She used to have a French pen-pal called Marie. She likes cats but she wouldn't call herself a cat person. She can't whistle to save her life. Her Aunty Susan used to run a B & B in a small village by the sea in Norfolk where they went for holidays every year. Once, a goat bit her hand when she tried to feed it. She has half a sugar in her tea (I need

two myself!). She's always liked the idea of living in the country. She once stayed overnight in a windmill. She's slightly frightened of cows. She likes it when you get caught in the rain and then you come in and put new warm clothes on. Although she doesn't like that it makes her hair go frizzy. She once punched Draco Malfoy in the face. She has a nice laugh. She is rubbish at chess. Her granddad used to have an old car with leather seats and now whenever she smells leather, she thinks of him. She makes a really good bacon sandwich. Her favourite season is Autumn because it's her birthday in September, plus she actually looks forward to going back to school! She once went to a fancy dress party dressed as someone called Sandy from Greece. Her best holiday ever was when they went camping in France for a week and it rained every day, so they stayed in the tent and played games instead. She doesn't like earwigs because a boy once told her they crawled in your ear to lay their eggs. When she was about seven she went through a phase where she wanted to be a knight. She would love to be Head Girl. She worries a lot about things but pretends she doesn't. She hates it when I swear. She's on to a losing battle with that one. She once got so sick of her hair she cut it all off herself with scissors. She loves books more than almost anything. She never lies. She had piano lessons when she was younger but she didn't have the patience for it. She actually quite likes sprouts. I know all these things about her but I've no idea what she thinks when she looks at me. "*Who's this loser?*" probably.

Sept 26th

I swear this diary is making me depressed. There's something about writing stuff down that makes you have to think about things waaay too much. I'm quite a cheerful bloke usually. Or maybe I'm not, and I just haven't realised it. Maybe I've just been suppressing my dark side all these years! Maybe this diary has put me under the Imperius curse and is controlling my brain! Shouldn't really joke about things like that, considering, but sod it. I suppose it's got to be better to get all my crap down on the page rather than taking it out on Harry or Hermione. I wonder if either of them keeps a diary. I bet *she* does. Oh God, there's probably stuff about me in it! "Dear Diary, I really, really fancy Ron. I wish he would ask me out and stop just staring at my tits." Or, more likely: "Dear Diary, I caught Ron staring at my tits again today. He is such a loser! If he thinks he's ever going to get anywhere with me, he's got another think coming! Twat." I bet she's never said that word in her life. I bet she's never even *thought* it. I bet she only ever thinks about lovely things, like baby animals and flowers. Whereas *my* mind is obviously a bucket of filth. "Dear Diary, I've completely gone off Ron since I found out what goes on in his head. I can't believe I ever fancied him. Malfoy is starting to look really appealing

all of a sudden." God almighty, Hermione and Malfoy, that's not something I want to think about. I wonder if *he* keeps a diary: "Dear Diary, just realised I'm a nasty little creep and everyone hates me. Think I'll have to top myself immediately." If only! Now that would definitely cheer me up!

Sept 27th

Fuck. Quidditch trials are in two days. I must not stuff this up. I'm practicing all the hours that God sends at the moment, but I never seem to get any better. Mind you, in my defence, it's hard to practice goalkeeping on your own. It only really works when Harry can come down as well, which is not that often. I'm probably wasting my time anyway. If I get back on the team it'll be a bloody miracle. I'll just have to hope that nobody else tries out for Keeper, so they *have* to keep me on the team. Why do I put myself through this? Last year was exactly the same. I mean, we won the cup and everything, and I did play okay in the final, but it took me all year to get to that stage. Months of worrying about the matches. Months of feeling rubbish. Why do I put myself through it? Oh, yeah. In a misguided attempt to impress her. Brilliant.

Sept 28th

Aargh, Quidditch trials tomorrow! I feel sick just thinking about it. I'm sure I'm going to fuck up. I'm going to fuck up in front of her and she'll know what a loser I am. Like she doesn't know already. Malfoy had better not turn up like last time. I don't want to hear that bloody song ever again. My stomach is doing somersaults. I may well puke. Maybe I'll die tonight and then at least I can't mess everything up. They can all go to my funeral and feel sorry and on my gravestone it will say "Ron Weasley, Worst Keeper Ever!"

Sept 29th

Hardly slept at all last night. It's *today*. I was sort of hoping I might wake up and it'd be tomorrow and it'd all be over, but no such luck. Everyone else is still asleep. Lucky them. Less than three hours until I face my doom. Could I cripple myself, do you think? How about a nice hard hammer to the ankles? Or I could accidentally slam the door on my hand. Or make myself throw up. Not that I need help for that one. Actually, I think I might go and sit on the floor in the bathroom for a bit.

Which do you want first, the good news or the bad news? Let's start with the good news and get it out of the way: I am still, by some minor miracle,

Gryffindor Keeper! Yay! So at least I have a stay of execution, I suppose. Sorry if I don't sound exactly enthusiastic about it. I was all happy earlier on, I promise. So, yeah, the bad news: there was this total gorilla Cormac McLaggen trying for the Keeper job. I think Hermione fancies him. While I'm waiting for my turn I look round to try and find Hermione in the crowd and see someone waving at me, but it's not her, it's only Lavender. *Hermione* is far too busy watching Cormac sodding McLaggen take his go. Brilliant. She must have a thing about blokes who are built like broomsheds, 'cos he's definitely in the Viktor Krum mould. Huge and stupid-looking. There's a loud roar then and I turn back just in time to see him save his fourth (damn!) and then spectacularly miss his fifth, which is *hilarious*, and cheers me up instantly. Tosser. In fact, I'm so happy he's screwed up - in front of her, too! - that I forget I was on the verge of puking on my shoes two minutes ago and go out there and save five goals in a row! I am awesome!

Well, I'm awesome for about three hours anyway. Because then it turns out Slughorn is having another one of his little parties tonight for *The Slug Club* (I'm not kidding, that's honestly what they call themselves, it's really pathetic) and this time Hermione's invited as well. Of course, *I'm* not. It's hardly surprising considering Slughorn can't even be bothered to learn my name. I suppose there's no point bothering for the thick kids. Harry can't go because he's got detention but at least he was actually invited. They both made a big thing of saying it was probably going to be really boring and pretending they didn't really want to go, which was sooo obviously just for my benefit. Always nice to be patronised though. Oh, and guess who else is going? McLaggen! No wonder she was so keen to go. She's probably batting her eyelids at him right now in fact. "Ooh, Cormac, you were so unlucky not to save that last goal..." AAARGH!!!

Oh, and as if *that* wasn't bad enough, this morning at breakfast I had to sit there and listen to her blatantly flirting with *Harry* as well! Needless to say, he's apparently suddenly really fanciable and I'm no-one. She didn't even mention me. She was going on about why suddenly loads of girls want to try out for Quidditch and it's because they all fancy Harry. Good for him. No really, I'm absolutely thrilled for him. I don't want her going to things with him and not with me, I don't care if it's stupid. I've always been the third wheel, I know that. But he never pays attention to anything she does! Alright, that's not fair, I know he's got his own problems. But I'm always there, I notice everything! Maybe that's the problem, I'm always there. Like the wallpaper. It's there, but you don't really notice it anymore. Jesus, I'm sick of the sound of my own whining. Good night. Not that there's anything good about it.

Sept 30th

First thing I said to her this morning, on the way down to breakfast:

ME: "So, how was the party"

HER: "Alright."

ME: "Just alright?"

HER: "Well, it was a bit dull, if anything."

ME: "McLaggen there, was he?"

HER: (refusing to look me in the eye, which is suspicious from the off if you ask me) "I don't know. I think so."

ME: "You *think* so? Did you not speak to him?"

HER: "Okay, fine, he was there."

ME: "So why did you just pretend not to know?"

HER: (firing up) "Excuse me, I didn't *pretend* anything, I just couldn't rememb-"

ME: (interrupting) "Well, if you don't want to tell me -"

HER: "There's nothing to tell! I probably said two words to him all night."

ME: (under my breath) "I've got two words to say to him..."

HER: "I've got two words to say to you as well. *Shut and up.*"

We didn't speak to each other all morning after that. Alright, so maybe I could have phrased it a bit better, but how come she was so cagey if nothing's going on? And if it was so *dull*, how come she's going to the next one as well? Yeah, because there's another party next week apparently. It's so obvious that she just wants to go so she can get off with McLaggen. Couldn't be more obvious if she tattooed it on her forehead.

Sept 31st

I had a dream last night in which we were playing Slytherin and for some reason I was wearing oven gloves, so I couldn't move my hands more than about a foot away from each other. So, of course, I couldn't save *anything*. We lost by a hundred points. And then, to top it all off, when I got back to the changing rooms, there was Hermione, snogging Cormac McLaggen! And when I got level with them I heard her say, "You're the best Keeper in the world, Cormac! Ron is such a loser compared to you!" So that was good.

OCTOBER

Oct 1st

Sometimes she talks to me like I'm eight. Tonight at dinner, Seamus knocked my glass over so I called him a wanker, and she gave me one of her looks and said, "Do you have to swear?" I said, "Well, I don't fucking have to, but it's just so fucking enjoyable." Seamus snorted water up his nose at that one. Even Lavender laughed. Her, though - not a flicker. I mean, come on, that's funny! Everyone else thinks I'm funny, but she obviously just thinks I'm an idiot. How does she manage not to swear when she gets annoyed? It's not like she doesn't get pissed off, if anything, she probably gets pissed off more than I do. She always stays annoyed longer than me anyway. Especially if it's me who's annoyed her. I usually get over it pretty quickly. Sometimes in the middle of an actual argument I catch myself and just can't be arsed anymore, or it suddenly seems funny. You'd think, the number of times I've pissed her off, a few swearwords would have slipped out, wouldn't you? Maybe she saves all her swearing for her diary: "Dear Diary, Ron is a fucking idiot. He really drives me fucking mental!" Ha ha! Maybe she secretly finds it cute: "Dear Diary, Ron is a fucking idiot. Lucky for him I have always been strangely attracted to really stupid boys!" Actually, I wouldn't be surprised if she never even mentions me. It's probably all about homework and stuff. "Dear Diary, Read six books today. I am really slipping!"

Oct 2nd

Can't sleep. First Quidditch practice tomorrow, which I'll no doubt majorly stuff up as usual. Yeah, I know it's only practice. Doesn't stop me lying here all night worrying about it. It's even worse when it's an actual match. I usually manage to doze off for about half an hour before I get woken up again and people try to force-feed me breakfast and wish me luck. You can see the pity in their eyes. Pity and resignation, because they know I'm just going to stuff it up as usual and we'll lose. Usually I can't eat anything at all and sometimes I throw up. I threw up a bit on the pitch once, but everyone was at the other end so I don't think they noticed. And when you're fifty feet up in the air on a broom and you throw up, it's particularly disgusting. Thank Merlin it wasn't windy! Oh God, *why* am I doing this? It's like I'm sitting there and I'm drenched in sweat and my hands are shaking and I think I might puke or pass out at any moment and the Quaffle's speeding towards me and everyone's yelling "Catch it, Ron!" and I watch myself going completely the wrong way, like it's in slow motion or something. Or accidentally kicking it into my own hoop, on one particularly brilliant

occasion. What time is it now? Great, six o'clock. I feel like I've had about five seconds sleep. Might as well get up, I suppose. Maybe I can drown myself under the shower.

Oct 3rd

Oh God, I was rubbish. I was just lousy. Harry should have just given the job to McLaggen and saved himself the bother of sacking me later. I must be the worst Keeper in the history of the entire world. I don't think I could have played any worse if I'd actually been dead. Weasley Is Our King! Weasley is a big fucking loser, more like.

Oct 4th

Harry's scheduled our next practice session on the same night as the party. He says it's because he doesn't want to spend the evening listening to Slughorn's boring anecdotes, but I suspect he's probably just done it so I don't feel left out. So he doesn't have to listen to me complaining! I'm quite relieved actually. At least I'm not going to have to go to bed at half past eight again, just to avoid being stuck on my own in the common room all evening like a total loser. She's still going, of course. Once girls start going to parties, you know you're screwed. What's the betting that even if she doesn't get off with Gorilla Boy she meets some smart, rich, good-looking tosser who sweeps her off her feet with tales of all the places he's been and books he's read? And who doesn't wear jumpers knitted by his mum. No wonder I don't get invited to parties. I wouldn't invite me to parties. Would have been cool, though. I can just picture it: low lights, loud music, a nice dark corner, her looking all lovely, me at least mostly hidden in darkness. Oh, yeah, and a lot of kissing...

HER, wearing a dreamy expression: "Oh, Ron, I had no idea you were such a good kisser!"

ME: "Yeah, I've been practicing on the back of my hand."

HER: "Hahahaha! You're so funny!"

ME: "No, really."

HER: "Oh."

(Awkward silence.)

HER: "Excuse me, I've just seen someone I know-"

Jesus, what kind of loser can't even get the girl in his own daydreams? I can't even get it right in *fiction*, what chance have I got in real life? Let's face it, it's never going to happen, is it? I'll probably be the guy she asks to make a funny speech at her wedding. Now *there's* something to look forward to. Me, shouting, "Can you believe she's marrying this arsehole?" and weeping drunkenly as I'm bundled away. Hahaha! Yeah, that's not actually funny, is it?

Oct 5th

ARGH!!!! What just happened? I think we had an argument, but I've no idea how it happened or who was annoyed with who or what it was even about! I'm pretty sure it'll turn out to be my fault, though. You wouldn't bet against that one, would you? So, yeah, this evening I am walking along the corridor with Hermione and I'm in the middle of a sentence when she suddenly says, "Could you not swear quite so much when telling this story?" I say, "What are you, my mum?" She says, "It's not big or clever, you know." I say, grinning so she knows I'm joking, "No, it's big and stupid, like me." She doesn't laugh. She's got her disapproving face on. I say, "You've ruined the story now." She says, "Well, if you didn't spend so much time swearing you might have finished it ages ago." I say, "Oh, f -" and stop because she looks really pleased with herself. She says, "See?" I am trying and failing to stay calm. I say, playing the guilt card, "People are being murdered out there and you're having a go at me about my *fucking swearing*?" I am aware that I'm now swearing deliberately to wind her up. She says, "That's got nothing to do with it. People take you more seriously if you speak nicely, that's just a fact. I read a book -"

I cut her off. I say, "Nobody takes me fucking seriously anyway. You certainly don't." She says, "Well, maybe I would if you stopped swearing. Anyway, that's not true -" I lose it completely and practically yell, "Oh, come on!" She gets suddenly annoyingly calm. She says I'm just acting like a child now. I say, maybe I wouldn't if she wasn't acting like my *fucking mum*. She says, "You always take everything the wrong way, that's your problem." I shout, "Oh, *that's* my problem, is it? I thought my problem was that I'm a big, stupid, childish idiot?" She says, still so annoyingly calm that my hands have bunched into fists, "You said that." I say, "Well, I don't hear you arguing!" She says, "No, you don't, do you? And do you know why that is?" I say, "Why?" She says, "Because you never pay attention."

Unbelievable! I am stunned that she thinks this. How could she possibly not know? I say, without thinking, "I never pay attention? I never pay attention? Jesus fucking Christ, you have no fucking idea, do you?" She

looks at me for what seems like ages, and then she says, "No idea about what?" I am not sure what she's asking. I am not sure what I've just said either. I have a bad feeling that this is one of those trick questions girls are so good at asking where whatever you say, it's the wrong thing. I am very confused. I am sure that if I open my mouth I'm going to say something I'm going to regret immediately. She says, again, "What have I no idea about, Ron?" She says it very quietly. Something weird has happened to my legs. I seem to have lost all the feeling in them. Perhaps I've had a stroke. I say, "Nothing" and then, "I've got to take a book back to the library" - the least likely excuse ever! - and I'm already walking away from her very fast. My legs, thank God, are working again. She calls after me, "What book?" I realise I am, brilliantly, empty-handed, but I can't stop myself walking away. I kick myself. And as soon I get out of her sight I kick the nearest wall really hard until I think I might have broken my foot.

Oct 6th

Hermione has been acting weird all day today. I'm in the common room earlier trying to finish a really horrible piece of homework for Snape, and she comes over and sits down opposite me. We say "hi" and then she doesn't say anything for ages and neither do I because I'm busy with my essay, and then we have this *ridiculous* conversation that makes no sense whatsoever:

HER: "Was there something you wanted to ask me?"

ME: "Like what?"

HER: "You tell me." (!!!!!)

ME: "Er... I don't think so."

HER: "Are you sure?"

ME: "I think I might remember."

HER: "Because you can ask me if you want, you know."

ME: (starting to get a bit annoyed) "Wouldn't I know if I wanted to ask you something?"

She gives me one of her disapproving stares. She says, "You'd think so, wouldn't you?" Then she says, "You've spelled inferius wrong, by the way" and she gets up and leaves again, nearly knocking the table over as well.

What the hell's that all about? She comes all the way over just to correct my bloody spelling! I've obviously done something wrong that I don't even know about, because she ignores me for the rest of the day and then later on I see her at dinner and the first thing she says is, "Well? Have you remembered what you were going to ask me yet?" I said, "Yeah, I have remembered what I wanted to ask you, actually: *Have you gone mental?*" Probably shouldn't have said it actually, because some people laughed and she looked absolutely furious and stormed out of the dining hall. How am I supposed to know what I've done to annoy her if she won't sodding tell me? Time of the month, I reckon.

Oct 7th

Would you believe she was *still* sulking with me today! At least she was snappy with Harry as well, so I think it was just something she was generally annoyed about rather than me particularly. Then this evening I said to her, "I see you've calmed down a bit, then" and she nearly bit my head off! I said, "What am I supposed to have actually done to annoy you, Hermione, because I've no idea?" She shouted, "No, you wouldn't, would you? Oh, this is *pointless!*" I said, "You're telling me." She said, "Oh my God! Are you ever - oh, forget it!" and stormed off again. I called after her: "Am I ever *what?*" but she didn't turn around. Am I ever going to grow up, probably. Am I ever going to learn to engage my brain before opening my mouth? Am I ever going to stop finding swearing funny? That'll be a no, then. No, no, and *fuck*, no! WomenThey never say what they actually mean, you're just supposed to *guess*.

Oct 8th

Christ, everywhere I go everyone's talking about this sodding party like it's the most exciting thing that's ever happened to them. It's bad enough that all the people who got invited keep banging on about it like they're something special, but even the people who *haven't* been invited are obsessed with it. Apparently some of "*Sluggy's Old Favourites*" are supposed to be coming, so -

Sorry, had to stop there because the idea of *Sluggy's Old Favourites* nearly made me puke. So, yeah, anyway, all these ridiculous rumours are going around about who's going to be there. I overheard some girls talking about it in the corridor earlier:

"I heard there were going to be members of the England Quidditch team there."

"Oh my God, really? Is it that blond one with the nice legs? You know the one I mean, oh, what's his *name*?"

"Well, I heard the bass player from the Weird Sisters is going to be there!"

"Ooh! Really? He's really fit! Oh my God, I'd totally kill for an invite!"

"Oh my God, me too!"

Oh my God, shut up! Of course, then they notice me standing there blatantly earwigging on their conversation, and all stop talking and turn to stare at me. I go bright red and get all flustered and pretend to be just looking for something in my bag, which is really convincing, I'm sure. They all start giggling and whispering behind me then, so I do this ridiculous mime where I look at my watch really obviously like I'm late for something, and put my head down and start walking away as fast as I can. And just as I get to the end of the corridor one of them says loudly, "I would so do him!", which makes me trip over my own feet and them all absolutely shriek with laughter. "Oh my God, he totally heard you!" "You're disgusting, Deena!" "I can't believe you said that!" "What? I totally would!" Jesus, I was just mortified. I mean, they were obviously just taking the piss, I'm not *that* stupid, but it was still really fucking embarrassing. Girls are scary when they get together. I'm glad Hermione's not like that. They were only fourth years as well!

Oh, and later on Lavender comes over to tell me she hasn't been invited to the party either, like that would make me feel any better. She says maybe the people who aren't going should do something themselves, have a little party in the common room or something. I say, sarcastically, "Yeah, because that wouldn't be sad at all, would it? Having to hold our own special Losers' Party 'cos no-one invited us to the real one." I feel a bit bad then because she looks hurt. She says, "Well, it was only an idea... I just thought it would be nice..." I say, "I'm not that fussed about it anyway, to be honest. I mean, the *Slug Club*! It's pathetic. I've got better things to do with my evening, thanks very much." She looks embarrassed and says, "Well... sorry you can't come. If you change your mind..." I tell her, "Yeah, I'll bear it in mind, thanks" in a tone that we both know plainly means, "when hell freezes over".

Oct 9th

Haha! Lavender came over at breakfast this morning to tell me that the Losers' Party is off. Well, she didn't call it the Losers' Party, obviously. She

just said, "No-one wanted to come." I said, "Told you!" She looked a bit upset. I suppose I could have been a bit more sympathetic. It was a stupid idea, though. Who wants to go to a party held by people who are too uncool to get invited to proper parties? Actually, that's not really true. Lavender's popular, and she didn't get an invite. Seamus didn't get one either. Nor did Dean. Lots of quite cool people aren't going, actually. Why does that not make me feel better? It's bad enough that H & H obviously feel they can't talk about it in front of me. They're probably the only people in the school who *aren't* talking about it. It's like the adults not talking about grown-up things in front of the kids. Don't talk about the party in front of ickle Ronniekins, he'll only sulk. Well, sod the both of them, I don't even care. It's a party at a school held by a sodding teacher, for Christ's sake. It's hardly going to be the party of the century, is it?

Later:

She's gone to Slughorn's party tonight. I'm downstairs in the common room struggling to finish my Potions essay before Quidditch practice, and she comes over to say hi on her way to the party. She looks lovely, actually. She's put her hair up and I think a bit of make-up on, and she's wearing those knee length brown leather boots I like, and a blue top that really suits her *and* she's wearing the silver bracelet I got her for her birthday, which makes my stomach flip over when I see it. She looks all happy and excited. For some reason this makes me feel really angry and a bit sick too, I don't know why. She waves and smiles at me, and comes over to the table and says, all happy and everything, "I'm off!" I think, yeah, great, without me, wearing *my* bracelet. I say, and I can't keep the anger out of my voice, "Bracelet looks nice." She doesn't seem to notice what a tosser I'm being. She says, "Yes, it's lovely, it's the first chance I've had to wear it. Thank you." I say (NO, Weasley!), "I wasn't fishing for thanks." She stops smiling then. Obviously, that's what I do best. I stop her smiling. Brilliant. I say, "Well, enjoy the party." She says, and she's getting angry now too, "It's not my fault you weren't invited. I didn't even want to go to the stupid party!" I say, "Is that why you dolled yourself up, then?" I immediately wish to Christ I'd never opened my mouth. There is a horrible silence. She looks at me like I've called her something dirty. Like she hates me. She goes red. She says, "Oh, grow up, Ron." and walks away. I bang my head repeatedly on the table. I am such a fuckwit. She came downstairs two minutes earlier and she was happy and before she's even got to the party, I've already ruined her evening. Nice one, genius. What the hell is wrong with me? Why do I say these things? Why can't I just leave it alone? I always mess things up. I always have to sabotage *everything*.

Oct 10th

She was really annoyed with me all day today. Big surprise. Most of the time she completely blanked me and when she did speak to me she just snapped my head off. Things she said to me today: "Pay attention!" "For heaven's sake" "Be quiet!" "Shut up!" "That's not funny!" "Well, if you bothered listening in the first place, you'd know already, wouldn't you?" "Oh, don't be such an idiot!" Can't help that one, Hermione. Being an idiot is the only thing I'm good at. Harry asked me what I'd done to piss her off *this* time. I just shrugged. Why let everyone know what a loser I am?

Oct 11th

Another Quidditch dream last night. I've actually been having them quite a bit but I can't always remember them. Wish to God I didn't remember this one. It was the final, and we were actually winning for once, although most of that was down to Ginny's scoring rather than my saving. And then I saw Hermione at the side of the pitch snogging Malfoy (*Malfoy? Where did that come from?!*) and totally lost the plot. I left the hoops completely unmarked and flew down there and punched him in the face. She shouted, "Don't hit the man I love!" And punched *me* in the face and broke my front teeth, so my mouth was all full of blood and bits of tooth. Then Harry came over and shouted "You're the worst Keeper we've ever had! You're off the team!" and punched me in the face as well. And then McGonagall came over and told me I was expelled. Hey, at least she didn't punch me though! Bonus!

Oct 12th

Really funny last night. Harry was trying out some of the spells written in the margins of his Potions textbook, so I got rudely woken up by him trying one out on me that had me hanging upside down over my bed by the ankles! It was a good couple of minutes 'til he could find the counter-spell to bring me down again - who tries out a spell before checking to see if there's a counter-spell first, for Christ's sake? I might have been stuck up there all night! I was really annoyed with him at first but once he'd let me down it just seemed hilarious. I was laughing about it later with Seamus & Dean and Seamus said, "Hey, we should try it out on girls! How funny would it be seeing Lavender hanging upside down showing off her knickers!" and we all fell about laughing. But then I thought about how upset Hermione would be if anyone did it to her and realised that actually, it wouldn't be funny at all. I caught Dean's eye and he stopped laughing too - probably assuming I was thinking about him doing it to Ginny - and he said, "No, you can't do that. You could have done it when you were about

five, maybe, but you can't do it now." Seamus said, "Why not?" and Dean said, "Well, you *could*, but not if you wanted any of them to ever speak to you again. Or to actually *get* in any of their knickers..." We all laughed again and Seamus said, "Yeah, good point!" and started talking about trying it out on Snape instead. So hopefully he's given up on the idea. Dean's right, I think if I let anyone do that to her she'd never speak to me again. Or let me - ahem, well, anyway... moving on...

Oct 13th

She looked really nice today. She had a new top on, I think. We were waiting in the common room for her to come down and when I saw her I felt like I'd been punched in the head. Honestly, for about ten seconds my head was actually swimming. It was right on the tip of my tongue to say "You look really nice today". I opened my mouth and everything, but I just couldn't. I missed the moment. And then for about the next half hour I could hardly speak, because I was just waiting for a break in the conversation so I could say it, but every time the moment arrived I was like struck dumb or something. It's five freaking words! Why couldn't I say it? If I had said it, what would even have happened? She'd have got embarrassed and thought I was taking the piss, probably.

Oct 14th

Spectacular Quidditch practice today. I managed to get whacked in the knee with a Bludger. Hurt like hell. My leg actually went into spasm for about fifteen minutes. Madame Pomfrey put something on it but I've got a bruise the size of Belgium. I bet by tomorrow it'll have gone purple. I had a small crowd looking at it earlier. Why does everyone think it's a good idea to poke me in the knee and ask, "Does that hurt?" YES! Yes, that does hurt, you cretin! I was sitting there with my trouser leg rolled up and everyone crowded round and eventually I snapped and told them all to fuck off. Then Hermione came over and I said, "I suppose you want a poke as well, do you?" and instantly realised what I'd just said. There was the longest embarrassed silence in the world. I just sat there frozen to my chair and grinned at her until I thought my face might crack. It's not like either of us to be lost for words, but that just about did it. Eventually I said, "Sorry, my knee hurts. I'm being an arsehole." She laughed, thank God, and told me not to worry about it. And I said, and it was like I was watching myself from above and yelling "Leave it, Weasley! Don't say it!" But I did say it, because I'd got away with it the first time and it was *funny*, and damn it, saying the unsayable is what I do. I said, "*You can poke me if you want.*"

And she said, "Don't push it, *Ronald*." That made me smile, because she only calls me that when she thinks I'm being particularly childish.

Just read the last couple of lines back: "Saying the unsayable is what I do". Although apparently I *can't* say "You look nice today." How sad is that?

Oct 15th

Seamus is such a *git!* I'm one of the last people at the dinner table tonight, just finishing off my second helping of jam sponge, and he deliberately comes over and plonks himself down next to me. He says, "Alright?" and I say, "Yeah, why?", already a bit suspicious 'cos I know what he's like. Anyway, since it's Seamus, the conversation takes about ten seconds to get round to girls. That girl he met on holiday sent him a photo of her wearing a bikini and he's been showing it around to anyone who wants to see. He says, "Well? What do you think?" What do I *think*? I think, "Bloody hell!", that's what I think. I've never actually seen anyone wearing a bikini before. It's not your usual witch attire. In fact, until I came here, I don't think I'd even seen any women wearing anything less than floor-length robes before. Apart from in those magazines Fred & George used to have hidden under their beds, ha ha. Although I *did* see Hermione in her knickers that time. Even though I was too hideously embarrassed to actually look at her. Oh my God, I wonder if *she's* got a bikini! She doesn't seem the type, though. Mind you, when she came back from France she was really brown, so maybe she only wears it on holiday. Maybe she sits by the pool and reads all the following year's course textbooks. While wearing a bikini. And rubbing in sun-tan lotion. AARGH!!! Now I'm all hot and flustered in front of Seamus again! He must think I'm a right idiot. Don't think about Hermione in a bikini, don't think about Hermione in a bikini, don't think abou-

Seamus says, grinning, "*When* you've finished looking... not bad, eh?" I say she's alright, not really my type, and he jumps on that: "Oh, yeah? What *is* your type?" "What?" "Are you a leg man, a tit man, or an arse man?" "Am I a *what*?" "Have you not heard that before?" "No!" "Oh, right. Do you not get out much down on the farm?" I go beetroot. "Shut up!" Frantically trying to think of something to say to get some much-needed cool points back. Seamus starts laughing. "Or is it just sheep that do it for you?" "Shut UP! Why are you such a wanker?" "Come on, it's not a hard question! Alright, which do you like best: blondes, brunettes or redheads? Surely not redheads, haha!" I can feel my face burning up. Desperately playing for time while I try to think of the opposite of Hermione, I just say, stupidly, "What?" He says, impatiently, "Which?" "Which what?" "Christ! Are you being dense on purpose?" "Shut up! What was the question

again?" "Blondes, brunettes, or redheads? Or maybe just sheep..." "I don't live on a bloody farm! Will you give it a rest?" "I'll give it a rest if you answer the question." "Fine! I like blondes, then! Happy now?" Seamus ignores me and shouts up the table to Lavender, who's sitting with Parvati. "Hey, Lavender!" "What?" "You're in luck! Weasley likes blondes!" I catch Lavender's eye - she giggles and whispers something to Parvati - and feel myself go absolutely crimson. Seamus turns back to me and gives me a really obvious thumbs-up: "Think you're well in there, mate!" I stutter impressively, "I'm not - I don't - I was just saying that to shut you up!" "Oh, right, so when you said *blondes*, what you actually meant was *sheep*?" He falls about laughing at that one, and I just swear at him and make sure I accidentally hit him round the head with my bag when I leave.

Later on, just to make the whole thing even *more* embarrassing, I literally bump into Lavender in the common room and we do one of those stupid "After you" "No, after you" dances. I tell her I'm sorry about earlier, Seamus was just being a git as usual. She laughs and says it's fine, and then just stands there blocking the door, giggling and twirling her hair round her finger. Now I know I'm a bit backwards in that department, but I'm pretty sure she was *flirting* with me. I mean, that thing with the hair... that's a *sign*, isn't it? Isn't it? Oh, what do I know? The trouble is I've spent so long hanging around with Hermione I don't know *how* to read the signs. She doesn't do any of that stuff, you know, the girly stuff: the hair twirling, the giggling... She's definitely not a giggler. *I'm* probably more of a giggler than she is. Not that she hasn't got a sense of humour. She has, contrary to what other people seem to think. It's just very, very dry. Anyway, she must have a sense of humour to fancy a gorilla like McLaggen. Not that I'm bitter or anything, ha ha.

Oct 16th

Jesus. Turns out I really *can't* say anything right to her, even when I'm trying to be nice. I really don't know why I bother. Everything I say's always wrong, so what's the point? She's gone off to another one of Slughorn's parties tonight. Obviously after last time I was determined not to ruin it again, but somehow we ended up having yet another stupid row. I'm not even sure how it happened. Bet you anything you like it'll be my fault, though.

So, she comes downstairs after about three hours of getting ready and Parvati has obviously been at her because she looks completely different. She's wearing a dress for a start. She never wears dresses. She must have borrowed it from someone. She looks nice, but she doesn't look like

Hermione. She's wearing a *lot* of make-up and either she's really embarrassed about something or she's gone a bit overboard with the blusher, because her face is bright red and this clashes really badly with the turquoise dress she's wearing. (Says me who always clashes with his own *hair!*) You can tell she isn't really comfortable in the dress because she keeps pulling the neck bit up and the skirt bit down and when she isn't doing that she keeps her arms folded the whole time. It wasn't even particularly low-cut or anything - trust me, I would have noticed! Anyway, eventually she comes over to say goodbye like last time and gives me a stare that clearly translates as, *Don't even think about it.* I'm confident, though. I've been rehearsing it all evening and in my head the conversation goes something like this:

HER: "Well, I'm off to the party."

ME: "Have a good time! You look nice."

HER: "Thanks."

ME: "You always do."

And then, in the version in my head, she says something like, "Oh, Ron!" and there is, um, some kissing. Of course, that doesn't happen. Of course, what actually happens is like a slow motion train wreck of a conversation, where she just talks over me, that goes something like this:

HER: "Well, I'm off. You don't have to pretend you want me to have a good time."

ME: "Have a good time! You - er..."

HER: "You don't have to look at me like that, either. I-"

ME: "...look nice. You-"

HER: "...know I look ridiculous."

ME: "...always do"

HER: "Oh, thanks! Why can't you ever just be-"

ME: "What? No! Wait, I didn't mean-"

HER: "- happy for me? Why do you always have to ruin everything?"

ME: "No, you weren't listening, that's not what I said, I meant-"

HER: (starting to cry) "Oh, shut up! Shut up, shut up, shut up!"

ME: (pathetically) "You always look ni-"

HER: (wiping her eyes and leaving a horrible smudge of mascara across her face) "Don't ever talk to me again!"

ME: (like an idiot): "You've got mascara on your face"

HER: "Oh..." (Clearly searching for an eight syllable word that will sum up how much she hates me, and failing spectacularly) "Piss off! I'm going to get changed!"

She storms off back up to her room.

ME: (to some random first years sitting at the next table) "I thought that went really well, didn't you?"

I see her again briefly about twenty minutes later and she's ditched the dress and all the make-up and is just wearing jeans and a top. She walks through the common room very quickly with her head down and doesn't look at me at all. I'm not quite so much of an idiot that I tell her "You look nice" again, although she does. She's been crying though. Her eyes are all puffy and red. Seeing that makes me want to go and give her a hug, but I'm definitely not *that* much of an idiot! Anyway, after that I have to go off to Quidditch practice and somehow manage to play even worse than usual because I can't stop myself checking my watch every five seconds and wondering what she's doing and who she's doing it with. She wasn't in the common room when I got back, so I don't know if she's still at the party or if she came back early and went to bed. I can't go to sleep until Neville comes back and I can ask him how it went. Twenty past twelve now. Come on!

Oct 17th

Fell asleep! Typical. Didn't get a chance to speak to Neville yet since almost everyone who was at the party failed to get up for breakfast this morning. It's about eleven thirty now and I'm just sitting in the common room, me and the other school losers who don't get invited to parties. It's like a graveyard. And it's raining, so we're all stuck inside. I'm writing this

behind my Potions textbook. She hasn't made an appearance yet. God, I hate Sundays.

Later: She turned up in the common room mid-afternoon and she still looked unhappy, but she didn't seem to be sulking with me, she said hello and stuff. Maybe she was just hungover or something. And later on she apologised and said she may have overreacted a bit. (*A bit!*) She said, "Sorry, it's not your fault, I was having a bad day." Hurray! For once, something is not my fault! I think that may actually be a first! And because I just instantly cheered up when she said that, I had a moment of madness and gave her a hug. I warned her first, so she wouldn't freak out, mind. I said, "Right, that calls for a hug!" and tried to make it into a joke, especially as we were in the common room and there were loads of people around. My heart was going like a train though. As I was going to do it I thought, no longer than two seconds, or she'll know, just count to two and let go. And I put my arms around her and hugged her and she was really warm and soft, and I counted, one... two... three... stop... stop... stop! Jesus, I can't tell you how hard it was to let go. I sort of wished I hadn't hugged her at all, because of course then I couldn't stop thinking about it and it was almost unbearable having to spend the rest of the afternoon just sitting there opposite her but not being able to do anything.

Oct 18th

I'll kill him. I'll kill him, and I'll have him stuffed and mounted over the entrance to the Slytherin common room as a warning to the rest of those bastards. *Aargh!* I was coming back from the dinner hall tonight and I had my pockets stuffed with biscuits, you know, for later, and someone behind me said, "Good God, Weasley, don't they feed you enough already?" I turned round, and it was Malfoy with his whole sodding gang; Crabbe and Goyle, Zabini, and that stupid cow Parkinson, sniggering like he'd just made the wittiest remark ever. He said, "Or perhaps it's a food parcel for the rest of your revolting family? You do realise that everyone else's families can afford to send *them* food parcels, not the other way around?" I told him to shut his mouth or I'd shut it for him, and tried to carry on walking but he got round in front of me and kept at it, obviously realising I wasn't likely to do anything serious when there were five of them. "I see they actually let you back on the team this year. I must say, I was astonished. At first I thought you must have bribed somebody, considering the appalling way you played last year, but then of course I realised that you haven't got any money, have you? What did you do, offer Potter sexual favours? Or perhaps your *girlfriend* offered them on your behalf?" Of course, I walked straight into that one: "What are you talking about, Malfoy,

I haven't got a girlfriend!" "Oh, yes, that's right, it's *me* who's got a girlfriend, and *you* who hasn't! So confusing! Just another way in which you're second-best to Potter, Weasley, at least he has actually *had* a girlfriend, even if she was just Cedric Diggory's leftovers..."

I tried to go back the other way then to get away from them, but Crabbe and Goyle just blocked the corridor. Malfoy was loving it, of course: "Perhaps you should go out with Granger, you'd be well-suited. She's a filthy Mudblood and you're a blood traitor. On second thoughts, the whole idea makes me feel positively nauseous. People like you shouldn't be allowed to breed. God only knows what horrors would hatch from you two. Even that halfwit halfbreed Hagrid would probably drown it at birth. Come on, Pansy, Blaise, Crabbe, Goyle, I think I need to wash my mouth out after speaking to this cretin. Perhaps we could work on a few new verses for "Weasley Is Our King". I feel inspired after our little chat. Maybe one about his *sister*..." They all laughed again and he walked off whistling that bastard song, and I managed to get a telling off from McGonagall for swearing in front of some first years. I hate him. He needs to die. He needs to die in the most painful way possible. And I need to go and hit something.

Oct 19th

Crap day. I've been a grumpy git all day. Snape had a go at me in front of the whole class about how rubbish my last essay was and the Slytherin lot were all sniggering at me. On the way out afterwards someone handed me a drawing of me sitting on my broomstick wearing a dunce's cap. They all laughed really loudly when they saw me open it. I was so depressed, I didn't even bother to go to lunch, I went for a walk instead. Didn't want to talk to anybody. I bunked off Transfiguration as well, so I'm sure I'm due at least a bollocking and probably a detention from McGonagall next time she sees me. It's almost impossible to bunk off at this bloody school. There's nowhere to hide and everyone notices everything you do. Later on when I saw Hermione she had a go at me too, which was all I needed. "You can't just miss lessons! You'll be in real trouble!" I told her to shut the fuck up and leave me alone. So now I feel bad about that as well. Especially as she'd brought me up a plate of sandwiches in case I was hungry.

Oct 20th

Slightly better day today. Got hauled up in front of McGonagall but lied and said I wasn't feeling very well and that's why I skipped Transfig. Amazingly, I got away with it. She just doesn't want to screw up her Quidditch team anymore than it is already. I apologised to Hermione about telling her to

shut up yesterday and she was really nice about it, she just said, "Well, we all have a bad day occasionally." Which made me feel worse. Later on she asked if I wanted to go for a walk and she managed to get out of me that I'm not sleeping very well because I'm worried about Quidditch. She said it's not worth beating myself up over, it's only a game! Yeah, thanks, Hermione. That definitely helps! *Only a game.* It's not only a game, it's bloody Quidditch! If I fuck up, I let down the whole House. She has no idea.

Oct 21st

Another Quidditch dream last night. In this one, it was the final, and we were playing the Bulgarian national team for some reason, so of course Krum was playing, only he was Chaser, so it was down to me to save all his goals. And did I? Did I fuck. We lost by about two hundred points, all scored by him, and afterwards as I was trawling back to the changing rooms, there was Krum, surrounded by adoring girls, holding the cup over his head and everyone was cheering and clapping. And Hermione came rushing over and I thought she'd come to console me, only she pushed me out of the way to get to Krum and threw herself into his arms instead. There was some kissing. Sadly, it didn't involve me. Aw, poor ickle Ronnienkins. What's that sound? Oh, it's the world's smallest violin playing just for you. You *loser*.

Oct 22nd

I was so tired today I fell asleep in my chair in the common room and when I eventually woke up Harry and Hermione were grinning at me. I went, "What?" and then I realised I'd drooled a bit on my shoulder. Really smooth, Weasley.

Oct 23rd

Actually fell asleep standing up today. We were walking down the corridor and I was a little bit ahead of the others, not really paying attention to their conversation. Anyway, I must have just closed my eyes for a second, because apparently I just veered off to the right for no reason and walked smack into the wall. Harry laughed like anything - I suppose it must have looked pretty funny. She didn't, though, she just looked horrified and asked, "Did you fall *asleep*?" I tried to deny it, but I couldn't think of any other explanation, so she obviously didn't believe me. She wouldn't let up for the rest of the day about it either: "Make sure you have an early night tonight. Harry, make sure he has an early night tonight!" No point telling her that early nights don't help, it's getting to sleep and staying asleep that's so

hard. Then this evening we were in the common room after dinner, and I suppose I must have dozed off again because the next thing I knew she was pulling me up out of the chair by my hands then literally pushing me towards the stairs to our dorm. I thought for a second she might actually come up with me, but she just stood at the bottom with her arms folded until I dragged myself up the stairs. It's probably a good thing she can't see me now, actually, writing this when I should be trying to get to sleep. I can hear her voice now: "Go to bed!" She'd probably knock me out with a Stunning spell or something. Actually, that's not a bad idea. Christ, I feel like death. I really should try and get some sleep, while it's quiet. I'm not sure I've even got the energy to take my shoes off. Might just lie here for a bit.

Oct 26th

Haven't written in this for a few days. Been too tired. Just thought I'd let you know.

Oct 27th

Hermione said I needed a change of scene so today we got out of the castle and went for a long walk in the grounds. And I don't know if it was the nice weather or the fresh air or just the fact that I quite fancy her in wellies, but it did seem to do the trick. She'd even brought some sandwiches. The girl thinks of everything! We went down by the lake and I fell over in some wet leaves and made her laugh. Not on purpose! It was one of those days where I think maybe she might like me as more than just friends after all, but then I realise how completely *insane* that is and come back down to earth again. I kept wanting to kiss her, actually. It was just such a nice day, we were both in a good mood, there was no-one else around, I hadn't pissed her off in some way... When am I ever going to get a chance like that again? Every time we stopped for whatever reason I really wanted to do it, but I left it and left it and by the time I'd decided it was always too late. At one point we reached this big patch of mud and we couldn't see any way around it, so I said, only half-jokingly, "Want a piggyback?" I don't think she heard me though, because she didn't reply, just waded out into the mud. So of course I followed her and my trainers instantly filled up with three inches of freezing cold muddy water. Maybe I should have asked her to give *me* a piggyback, since she was the one with wellies on! It's probably a good thing she didn't hear me, actually. Can you imagine if she'd said yes? Oh my God! I'd probably have keeled over from the shock. Or dropped her in the mud! Still, at least it's given my brain something else to think about other than Quidditch. It was a good day. I'll

probably sleep like a log tonight after all that fresh air. And it's Sunday tomorrow, so I can have a lie-in! Hurray!

Oct 28th

Fantastic day today. It rained all day so we sat in the common room and she kept trying to think of Muggle things that would make me laugh, like... ten pin bowling! This sounds really weird. It's some sort of sport you play in an alley, and you can wear your normal clothes but everyone swaps shoes with each other for some bizarre reason. And all the grown-ups are a bit drunk while they're playing, which surely can't help, and everyone adopts the names of famous people from Muggle history instead of their own names. Hermione always used to be Catherine the Great. It sounds *mental*. And she said if I ever come to stay with her again in August there's a big fair in the local park and there's something called a ghost train, which goes through a tunnel and Muggles dressed up as ghosts jump out at you. She says it's really rubbish, even if you haven't seen actual ghosts, but that I'd probably find it funny so we should go on it anyway. And she says all the boys try to win cuddly toys for their girlfriends by throwing hoops over stacks of cans, and you always see the girls walking around with these giant toy giraffes and the boys looking really pleased with themselves and it always makes her laugh. Not sure if she means she thinks it's stupid or she's dropping a massive hint. Anyway, I'd be rubbish. I'm a Keeper - I can't throw, I can only catch!

Oh, and there's something called a waltzer which is nothing to do with dancing, it's like a giant round metal spinning thing with chairs on, and they strap you in, and it spins round really fast. And she said when it stops you always want to go on it again, but you mustn't because the second time you always feel sick and dizzy and it hurts your neck. Why on earth would you get on something that made you want to throw up? And bumper cars - you have to try to crash them into the other cars on purpose! Muggles are sick, I'm telling you. She was trying to tell me this is something Muggle kids do for fun! I reckon she was just taking the piss out of me, to be honest. Everything she described made me laugh because it sounded so ridiculous and it made her laugh too because she said it was hard to explain something like bumper cars to a wizard. She says she'd like to take me on the waltzer. Hey, let's face it, she can take me anywhere she likes, I'm not complaining! I might even go on it twice! Three times! What would happen, would your head spin right off?

Oct 29th

Rained again today. I was hoping Quidditch practice might be cancelled, but no such luck. I was slightly less than dreadful, I suppose. I did actually manage to save a couple. Which was pretty amazing because it was raining so hard I couldn't even see the other end of the pitch. I was so wet afterwards I left a trail of small puddles all the way up to my room and Filch had a go at me. I stuck two fingers up at him over my shoulder and he shouted, "I saw that! I'll get you!" Fuck him, he never does any work anyway, he should be grateful to me for giving him something to do.

Oct 30th

Oh God, I was just downstairs playing chess with Harry, and Hermione comes over to join us. Her hair's all wet so I say, not really paying attention, "Is it still raining outside?" and she says, "No, I've just had a bath." And I knock my Rook right across the board and scatter all Harry's pawns. Even when we get the board fixed up again I can't concentrate on the game at all, especially as she's sitting right in my line of vision, looking *damp*. For a good fifteen minutes I have really lost it, because instead of thinking what my next move should be, I'm just thinking about Hermione in the bath. I actually almost lose the game! Harry should employ her as a distraction, maybe then he might actually stand a chance of beating me occasionally.

Oct 31st

I'm a bit freaked out. Lavender just came up to me in the corridor and started complaining about Professor McGonagall, who'd apparently just told her that her school uniform was "*Unacceptable!* Can you believe it? That cow!" I said, "What's wrong with it?" "She told me my skirt's too short! What do you think? Do *you* think my skirt's too short?" She did a little twirl in front of me and I tried desperately not to look at her legs. "Er... it looks alright to me..." She said, "*Thank you!*" and then started banging on about how "McGonagall's obviously just jealous because I'm young and pretty and popular and I've got nice legs -" (*Aargh, I just looked at her legs again!*) "- and she's a flat-chested -" (*Aargh, I just looked at her chest!*) "- wizened old *bat* who probably can't even remember the last time anyone got in her knickers!" (*Aargh, I just - somebody poke my eyes out with sticks, for Christ's sake!*) I made some rubbish excuse about having to go and meet Harry and got the hell out of there as fast as I could.

It's a bit weird, but I really think she might actually fancy me. Typical. I spend two years trying to get Hermione to fancy me, probably speak to Lavender *twice* in all that time, and look what happens. Hermione still thinks I'm an idiot and Lavender, with no encouragement whatsoever on

my part, comes up and flashes her legs at me! I don't understand women. I suppose I should be grateful *someone* fancies me and I'm not totally hideous, but, you know, *Lavender!* I mean, she's alright, I suppose. She *is* quite pretty. She's definitely got, what's the phrase Seamus uses, oh yeah - *a couple of good points*. Ahem. She's just a bit... I dunno, I've never really thought about it. No point really. But it does make me want to say to Hermione: "See? See? Some girls - well, a girl - actually fancies me! Do you think maybe you might at some point realise you actually like me as more than just friends? Any chance at all? Ever? No?"

NOVEMBER

Nov 1st

Shit, the first match has just been announced and it's against Slytherin. I hate playing them, every time one of them gets near me I get a chorus of "Weasley Is Our King". Sometimes they just WHISTLE it. The look on Malfoy's stupid face, he just loves it. He always makes a point of coming all the way over just to wind me up. I'm sure he's hoping I'll punch him and get a lifetime ban like Fred and George did. Bastard. And even if nobody's singing that bloody song, I can still hear it in my head: "Weasley was born in a bin, he always lets the Quaffle in, he cannot save a single thing, that's why Slytherins all sing, Weasley is our king" Not just the Slytherins either, the other teams sing it as well, they just change the words. I'm the laughing stock of the entire school. You try playing well when people are singing that at you. You try when you've got it in your own head. I've never been so humiliated in my life as the first time I heard that damn song. If I could have Apparated out of there in the middle of the match I would have. Harry should just let me resign. I keep offering and he keeps prolonging the agony by refusing to let me. I let in about six goals today. You should have seen the disgusted looks on the faces of the rest of the team. And as if that wasn't bad enough, Ginny came up to me afterwards and told me to pull myself together. Hermione gave me a sympathetic little smile. I only wanted to get on the team in the first place because I thought it might impress her, and it turns out I'm so rubbish she just feels sorry for me instead. Go, Ron!

Nov 2nd

Halfway through breakfast this morning, chewing the same piece of cold toast for about ten minutes, trying not to listen to everyone talking about the match, when suddenly I just knew I was going to throw up, and jumped up and legged it out of the hall to great cheers from the Slytherin table. Someone shouted, "Shame you're not that fast on your broom, Weasley!" and they all laughed. I didn't even make it to the bathroom either, I was sick behind a statue. And I couldn't even clear it up because I'd left my wand in my bag and somehow didn't feel like going back in there to get it and facing all the jeers again. When I got to first lesson I got another round of applause from the Slytherins as well, so that was a good start to the day.

Nov 3rd

Pretty proud of myself today. Malfoy just deliberately shoved me in the corridor and muttered something predictable about my mum, and instead of, you know, punching him into the middle of next week, I just did the "wanker" sign and walked off quickly before I could change my mind. He really seems to have lost it recently: it was a half-hearted shove and a lame insult. Mind you, I'm about a foot taller than he is these days, so I wouldn't mess with me either! He looks like shit, actually. Maybe he's got some horrible disease, fingers crossed. Maybe he's just realised he's going out with Parkinson and he's thinking about the best way to kill himself. I'd definitely chuck myself off the top of the Astronomy Tower rather than have to snog Pansy! Harry is still banging on about Malfoy being up to something. It's like the time he thought Malfoy was the Heir of Slytherin and that turned out to be complete bollocks of course. Malfoy's a little shit - and I WILL get him on his own one day and kick his teeth in for all the things he's ever said about her - but I hardly think he's a Death Eater. I just nod and tune him out. He never really listens if you disagree with him anyway. Hermione agrees with me. Not about Harry not listening, about Malfoy.

Nov 4th

Every time I walk past anyone from Slytherin lately they accidentally knock into me or start humming Weasley Is Our King. I don't tell anyone but I'm pretty sure they're putting hexes on me to mess me up. My shoelaces have come undone about twenty times this week and the strap on my bag keeps breaking as well, which means I keep being late for things because I have to stop and pick up all my stuff. Doesn't help that they then "accidentally" kick things up the corridor or down the stairs or just blatantly tread on them on purpose. I've lost six quills and five chocolate frogs this week already. Some git even put a box with a spider in it in my bag this morning, so when I went to get my textbook out I found this little box and didn't know what it was, and when I opened it I yelled and threw the box up in the air and everyone laughed. And as if that wasn't bad enough, Snape deducted ten points from Gryffindor for me disturbing the class! And yesterday I found a drawing that someone had slipped into my coat pocket of me on my broomstick with two broken arms. They'd used the same red ink for the blood and for my hair. It's not even that I'm really worried about, it's just letting everyone down again, and making myself look an idiot in front of her. I can picture exactly the pitying little smile she'll give me as well. Really doesn't help. Just makes me feel even more of a loser.

Nov 5th

Remind me, why am I doing this again? I must be mental. I keep going on these little walks around the castle, trying to psych myself up. You know the kind of thing: "You can do it! You're a winner! You rule!" Which might even work if I didn't also have the usual running commentary in my head telling me, "No, you can't! You're a loser! You suck!" I went for a long walk outside today during free period and ended up sitting outside on some steps by the greenhouse, looking especially pathetic I'm sure, with my head in my hands and shivering because I'd come out without my jumper. I'd just been a little bit sick on my shoe as well. Then someone behind me said, "Jesus, Ron, you look like shit!" I turned around, expecting to see one of the Slytherin bastards, and it was Ginny. I said, "If you've just come to have a go at me again, you can sod off." She came over and sat down next to me and gave me a big hug. She said, "Ron, I'm really, really sorry I was such a cow to you the other day. You do know you're my favourite brother, don't you?" That made me smile. We've been doing this routine for years. Me: "Aw, thanks, Ginny, and you're my favourite sister." Her: "I'm your *only* sister." Me: "I know." Har har. She said, "Is that sick on your shoe?" I said, "Yeah, classy, huh?" She said, "You always are!" and laughed. She asked if Madame Pomfrey could give me something to stop me feeling sick and I told her that she had, but it tasted so revolting it made me throw up. She said, "You know, I think you're actually green rather than the usual Weasley white. I don't think I've ever seen anyone actually green before." I said, "Yeah, you should take a picture" and promptly threw up again. She said, "That's what I like about you, you always find the time to make jokes, even when you're actually mid-vomit", then gave me another hug and said she hoped I felt better, and went off to her lesson. And after about ten minutes I realised I was late for Defence against the Dark Arts and Snape would probably give me a whole month's worth of detentions. It was a toss-up between getting there fifteen minutes late or not going at all. I decided I couldn't get punished any worse if I bailed off the whole lesson, so I stayed where I was. Later on Harry told me Snape had asked if anyone knew where I was and the Slytherins had all made puking noises.

Nov 6th

Another Quidditch practice this morning. Hardly slept last night as usual and couldn't eat any breakfast either, and to be honest the last couple of times I've been sticking my fingers down my throat beforehand so I can't throw up on the pitch even if I want to. Yeah, I know, I'm disgusting. I've been going to the girls' bathroom on the second floor, the one no-one uses because you're likely to get Moaning Myrtle pestering you. So I race up there while everyone's still at breakfast and I'm leaning over the sink

retching attractively when I hear someone come in and it's Hermione. She says, "I thought you might need someone to hold your hair out of your eyes." Which makes me laugh. Which makes me cough. Which makes me throw up a little bit in the sink. In front of her! I don't think I could have looked more pathetic if I tried. I say, "Could you not watch me being sick, please?" She says, "Why do you put yourself through this? Why don't you give it up if it makes you miserable?" I say, "I wanted to be good at *something*." Wiping sick from my mouth. Classy. She says, "You *are* good at it. You saved more goals than anyone else in the trials. You won the cup last year. You're a good player. You've just got a problem with nerves." I say, "Tell me about it!" and she laughs, and says, "And you're good at lots of other things as well. You don't need to prove yourself to anybody." I think, Yeah, I do, I need to prove myself to *you*, but I say, "Like what, exactly?" And she says: "You're a good friend. You're very loyal. You're brave. You make me laugh. You're smart -" I go "Yeah, right!" at this point and she says, "You *are*. If you weren't, you wouldn't beat everyone in Gryffindor and all your brothers at wizard's chess, would you?"

At any other time I might manage to be happy about this, but my eyes and nose are streaming, I'm red in the face, I'm sweaty, I'm shivering, every time I cough or gag it's like knives in my lungs - basically I look and feel fucking awful, and what's worse, I look and feel fucking awful in front of her. I wish to God, more than anything in the world, that she would just go away. She says some more stuff about how wonderful I am, but I stop listening. I don't believe her anyway. I wouldn't be at all surprised if Harry sent her up here hoping I might pull myself together and stop messing up his Quidditch team. I mean, funny, I suppose so, if that's even worth anything, which I seriously doubt, and loyal, alright, I'll take that one too, but smart??? Don't make me laugh! Anyway, puking up in front of her seems to cancel out being good at sodding *chess*. And brave? She really thinks I'm brave? No, there's no way she thinks that. *Brave!* Yeah, so brave I'm up here throwing up because I'm nervous about a fucking Quidditch match. And not brave enough to tell her I like her. Not nearly brave enough. Anyway, then she says, "Feeling better?" and I lie and say "Yeah, thanks", and we go back downstairs. You'd think after this I'd be on top of the world and play a demon game of Quidditch, but I'm so distracted going over and over what she's said that I let in about a dozen goals. Thinking about it now, though, I am grinning like an idiot. Even if she did just say it to cheer me up, it was nice of her, and she didn't *have* to say it, did she?

Nov 7th

Good day today. Malfoy said something hilarious about my goalkeeping skills and before I could tell him to go fuck himself, Hermione snapped at him, "Funny, I didn't see you winning the Quidditch Cup last year, Malfoy!" I went round with a big grin on my face for the rest of the day.

Nov 8th

I had a dream about her last night. No, not *that* kind of dream, you sicko! We were, er, kissing, though. In front of the entire school. On the Quidditch pitch. In the middle of the final, while Quaffle after Quaffle went past me. Everyone was singing "Weasley Is Our King". We lost by a million points to ten. I was so happy about snogging Hermione, I didn't even care!

Reminds me of a joke from this Muggle jokebook she got me for Christmas a few years ago:

"I had a dream about you last night."
"Did you?"
"No, you wouldn't let me."

Nov 9th

Well, this isn't really working out like I planned. Harry's off at one of his private lessons with Dumbledore again, she's at another of sodding Slughorn's sodding parties, and I'm sat up here on my own like the loser I am. So much for getting her all to myself for a couple of hours every week. I might just go to bed, actually. It's only half eight, but anything's got to be better than just sitting here worrying about what she's up to all evening. Secretly hoping she's having a really rubbish time and McLaggen's boring her stupid. As opposed to *snogging* her stupid, which I really don't want to think about, thanks very much. Shit. Too late.

Nov 10th

Help, I'm totally confused! I think Hermione asked me out! I *think*... It felt like she was asking me out but she was really pissed off at me when she said it, so I don't know! Slughorn's having a Christmas party, basically, and I was complaining that I never get invited and I probably said something brilliant about her going with McLaggen or something. Because I am so classy and I always say exactly the right thing to piss her off as opposed to the thing I want to say which is sitting in my head. It's like it's right there, and I *could* say it, but every single bloody time I somehow say something spectacularly stupid instead. Every time! So I said whatever dumb-arse

thing I said about McLaggen and then she said, "Well, we're allowed to bring guests, and I was *going* to ask you, but if you think it's stupid, then I won't bother!" And this is right in the middle of Herbology so she was stuck there with me. She looked really upset about it. And I thought - YOU did that, Weasley, you utter moron, you upset her! Again. Well done. But I *still* wasn't sure so I asked her again if she meant she was going to ask me to the party with her and she said yes (YES!), but obviously if I'd rather she got off with McLaggen then forget it. And I said no, I wouldn't rather she got off with McLaggen, and then neither of us said anything for about five million years, and then the bell went, and we haven't mentioned it since, so I STILL DON'T KNOW!

Am I being particularly dense? (Yeah, 'cos that would be totally unlike me, wouldn't it?) Did she mean she was just asking me as a friend? Obviously she feels sorry for me because I'm too stupid to get invited to Slughorn's parties. Is she still asking now or did I make her change her mind with my usual clanking conversation skills? So, yeah, I am totally confused. I have got to be really careful not to say anything that she could take the wrong way before the party. I'll have to magic my mouth shut. Because if she meant it, if she meant to ask me, not just as a friend, then ARGH!!! I can't even think about it! Can you imagine ME going out with HER? Oh my GOD, what if I get to kiss her? I've never kissed anyone, what if I'm crap? What if I go to kiss her and she's like, "Urgh! Get off! What were you thinking? I wouldn't go out with you if you were the last person on earth! I meant as FRIENDS, obviously!" Boy meets girl, boy fancies girl, boy makes rubbish attempt to kiss girl at party, girl is completely mortified and never speaks to boy again. Jesus, this is actually worse than when she thought I was a nobody. Do not stuff this up, Weasley. This might be my one chance, the only one I ever get, and if I stuff it up, she'll never look at me again. I'll have to go and hide in the mountains and live off rats, like Sirius.

Nov 11th

I keep thinking about the party. It's just going to be brilliant! Even if she didn't mean as more than friends, I'm still *going* with her, and you never know, do you? A few Butterbeers, a nice dark corner, really loud music so we have to talk with our heads close together... Oh my God! I might just get up the courage to try and kiss her. If the moment's right... You never know, it *could* happen! I might not screw it up. She might have meant as more than friends. She did ask me, after all. She might *want* me to kiss her. She might be expecting it. I'll probably miss her mouth or something. Or dribble on her. Or spill Butterbeer down her. Let's face it, if there's any possible way I can screw this up, I'll probably do it. Oh God, please please

please please please don't let me screw this up. I've only been waiting for this chance for about a million years. And then what if she *didn't* mean as more than friends, and I jump on her and she totally freaks out? It would be the most embarrassing thing ever. She'd probably never speak to me again. But then she *did* ask me, so... Oh, I don't know! I really really want to kiss her, but I don't want to mess things up. I suppose at least I've got a month to try and work out what she meant before the party. I might even kiss her before then! Yeah, that'll definitely happen, Weasley, you absolute muppet. But it might. No, it won't. But it *might!*

Nov 12th

What am I even supposed to *wear* to this bloody party anyway? I haven't got anything good enough to wear to a party. I've hardly got anything good enough to wear, full stop. The only thing I've got that's even remotely smart is my dress robes, at least they're new. I don't think it's going to be that kind of party, though. I don't want to go looking like my dad. I could wear my jeans, I suppose. I think Neville wore jeans when he went. They're the only trousers I've got that aren't about three inches too short for me anyway. Mind you, it's a Christmas party, you might have to make more of an effort than usual. Ha! Maybe I should just go in my school uniform! Actually, that's not a bad idea. I could wear the trousers anyway, they're grey, she might not realise, and then I could borrow a shirt from Harry or something. No, that's no good, she'd probably recognise it. Seamus has got some smart shirts, he might let me borrow one. No, I can't ask him, he'd just take the piss: "You *do* fancy her! I knew it! Hahahaha!" And what if he said something to her? I wouldn't put it past him, the git. I suppose I could ask Dean. Actually, no, forget it, I can't go in a borrowed shirt and my school trousers, how sad would that be? Aargh!!! If only I still had that ten Galleons! I could have asked Fred & George to get me a decent shirt in London, but no, I had to spend it on that bloody Potions textbook instead. Sodding Slughorn.

Oh, what's even the point, anyway? It's not like she doesn't already know what a complete and utter scruffbag I am. It's probably a bit late to try and impress her now. She'll be dressed up and looking all lovely, and then I'll turn up looking like I've been dragged through a hedge backwards as usual, and she'll regret she even asked me: "Oh, *hi*, Cormac, don't you look smart? Nice to see *some* people have made an effort... *Really*? I look beautiful? Why, thank you, you're such a gentleman! The nicest thing Ron's ever said about me is that I did a good job correcting the spelling on his Charms essay. What's that you say? *Mistletoe?*" Yeah, and then she can spend the evening getting off with Gorilla Boy and I can just drink

myself to death or something. There'd better be alcohol at this sodding party. I think I'm going to need it.

Nov 13th

I think I'm going nuts. I really wish I could talk to Harry about this. He was there when she asked me to the party as well, so I could ask him what he thinks she meant by it, but I won't, obviously. How the hell did I get myself into a situation where my two best friends are the last two people I can actually talk to about it? If there was just *someone* I could talk to. Anyone. Don't take it personally or anything, but you're no use in these situations. I need someone who can tell me what to do. "Obviously, Ron, she meant just as friends. Now shut up and get over it!" Ha ha. That would help, definitely. I've been trying to work out what she meant by massively over-analysing everything she says, but she seems to be going out of her way not to bring it up. Even when I've casually dropped it into conversation, she just changes the subject. We've both spent the last couple of days being ridiculously over-polite to each other, actually. "Would you mind passing the potatoes please, Ron?" "That's absolutely no problem, Hermione" "Thank you very much, Ron" "My pleasure, Hermione." It would be funny if it wasn't driving me insane. I know why *I'm* doing it - so I don't annoy her and she un-invites me to the party, but I don't know why *she's* doing it. Maybe so I don't get the wrong idea. Maybe she meant just as friends and this is her way of telling me. Maybe she's regretting it already. Maybe I should just shut the fuck up.

Nov 14th

6.36 a.m:

Woke up in a panic after a stupid dream where I was in the common room, and I was the only one in there, I couldn't understand where everybody had got to. And then she came in, all dressed up with loads of jewellery and make-up and a long dress and fur coat on, and said, "Where have you been? I was waiting for you to come and take me to the party, but you didn't show up, so I went with McLaggen instead..."

6.52 a.m:

I've just thought, what if there's *dancing*? Surely she won't be expecting me to dance with her! I can't dance to save my life. Not with my feet, anyway. She should know that about me by now. I'll probably stand on her foot and break her toe or something. That would be just typical. Oh, for God's sake,

stop it! It's going to be fine. It's going to be perfect. It's *not* going to be a total disaster. I'm *not* going to fuck it up. I'm *not*. Yeah, because I *never* fuck it up, do I? It would be so out of character!

7.03 a.m:

This is ridiculous. I've got another whole month of this crap. I know what I'm like as well, it'll be like Quidditch all over again. I'll spend the entire month worrying about it and convincing myself it's going to go wrong, and by the time the party comes around I'll be so wound up I'll say or do something stupid and ruin it all. It's just sooo predictable... Ha! Maybe I should just turn her down: "Sorry, Hermione, I'm flattered and all, but I just don't fancy you..."

7.16 a.m:

If I just knew what she *meant* by it! Why couldn't she have said, "I was going to ask you - JUST AS FRIENDS!" Instead of letting me get my hopes up. Giving me stupid ideas. Giving me *expectatations*...

7.23 a.m:

She obviously just asked me as friends and I'm seriously deluding myself if I think she meant anything else by it.

7.31 a.m:

But then, she did ask me... She should have said if she only meant as friends. She must have known I'd assume it was a date. Oh my God, it's a *date*! No, don't be stupid, it's not a date, it's just a party. There'll be loads of other people there. It's not like it's going to be just the two of us or anything. I probably won't be able to get her on her own anyway. Harry will be there, for a start. Yeah, that's the best way to look at it. Nothing's going to happen. What's the point of getting all stressed about it when nothing's even going to happen? I'll just have a few drinks and enjoy myself. We won't have an argument, I won't punch McLaggen, she won't throw anything at me, and I definitely won't try to kiss her. And the next day everything will be exactly the same as it always has.

7.42 a.m:

But what if I don't *want* everything to be exactly the same? What if I want to kiss her? What if she actually wants me to?

7.45 a.m:

I suppose at least if I go to kiss her and she freaks out I could always blame it on the drink!

7.56 a.m:

The more I think about this, the more I think maybe she *did* mean to ask me out, maybe she *did* mean as more than friends.

7.59 a.m.

But if I'm wrong...

8.04 a.m.

Sod it, I'm going down to breakfast.

Nov 15th

AAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGHHHHH
HHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!This has been the worst twenty-four hours EVER!!!
Started with a really lousy Quidditch practice yesterday, during which I pissed off everyone on the team and accidentally hit Demelza in the face, which was spectacular, even for me. And this wasn't even the worst bit of the day! No, the worst bit was having a huge classic Weasley family shouting match with Ginny after I caught her snogging Dean, during which she basically announced I had the experience of a twelve year old *in front of Harry*, and that everyone was at it except me, including Hermione who has apparently been *snogging Viktor Krum*. Obviously, I was delighted with this fantastic piece of news. Obviously, I took it all really well and didn't then bite the heads off of Harry and Hermione and actually anyone who got in my way all day today. I was too angry to write anything last night but now I just feel like the most pathetic idiot on the planet. Of course she fancies him and not me. Of course she meant just as friends, or only invited me to the party because she felt sorry for me, or because Harry told her to cheer me up so maybe I might actually save some sodding goals for a change. Of course she was never remotely interested in me in that way, not even for a second. Why would she be? Why would *anyone*? I keep thinking about what Ginny said, and she's right, I've got no experience, and there's Hermione who's been (AARGH! KILL ME! KILL ME NOW!) kissing Viktor Krum! To think that I was actually worried about McLaggen, and the *whole time*... When did this happen? Does everyone know except me?

How could I have been so stupid? I hate Ginny. Why did she have to tell me in the first place? What did I ever do to her? Why didn't she just punch me in the face? It would have been better than *this*. Anything would have been better than this. I can hardly write this because my hands are permanently bunched into fists. I feel like a firework about to go off at any moment. If anyone so much as looks at me the wrong way I am going to explode and everyone had better get the hell out of the way. She's been kissing him. She's been kissing HIM! I feel like my brain's melting, it's all I can think about. It was supposed to be me, not him! Why the fuck did I wait this long? It's been just killing me today, having to go to lessons and see her, and I can't even look at her because it makes me want to hit something. I have to stay away from her because there's like this anger inside me and I want to get her up against a wall and shout at her, Why did you do this to me? Did you really not have any idea what this would do to me? Did you just not care? Fuck, I can't be angry at her, I don't want to be angry at her, it's my fault, not hers. I should have said something, I should have told her. What the hell was I waiting for? And now I don't think I can ever look at her again. Excuse me while I punch the shit out of my pillow.

Nov 16th

Another brilliant day. Still angry! Can't seem to wind down, can't seem to get my fists unclenched. Still can't look at her. She's really upset with me because of course she's got no idea why I suddenly seem to hate her so much. It's not her I hate, it's me. I'm the one who was too chicken to tell her. I'm the one who always messes everything up. Boy meets girl, boy is a big fucking loser, girl gets off with Bulgarian Quidditch player, boy regrets it for the rest of his stupid life. I made her cry today. Thinking about that one is making me have to stuff my fist in my mouth to stop myself crying too. That's really pathetic, isn't it? Yeah, well, that's me, patheticPathetic, useless, stupid, waste of sodding space. Another really terrible Quidditch practice as well. Nobody on the team is even talking to me anymore, I just get death stares, which is fine, because I've not exactly been Mr. Chatty myself. Harry says if I don't pull myself together for the match on Saturday I'm off the team. Fine by me. Sack me, I couldn't feel any worse.

Nov 17th

She keeps asking me what she's done. Like she doesn't know! She *must* know! A couple of times I've been on the verge of just sodding telling her, but managed to stop myself, thank God. I can't control the things I say to her at the best of times, so knowing me I'd probably just make things worse. Like they could get worse. "Just tell me what I've done!" Fine, you

really want to know? I really like you. I really, *really* like you. I thought you might actually like me too. I thought you meant as more than friends when you asked me to go to the party. I thought I might actually stand a chance with a girl who got asked to the ball by *Viktor Krum*. Go on, laugh. No, I'm not saying anything. I know what she's like as well, she'd be all sympathetic and *mature* about it. "Sorry, Ron, I had no idea you felt this way. I'm very flattered, but I'm going out with Viktor, who is famous and loaded and was European Quidditch Player of The Year last year, and has actually kissed a girl before, unlike you, you sad, sad loser. Sorry, I thought you knew..." Jesus, it's bad enough that she obviously only asked me because she felt sorry for me, there's no way I'm letting her have the satisfaction of knowing I actually care. Not that I *do* care. Not anymore, anyway. I'm sick of the whole thing. Her. Me. Viktor bastard Krum. Everything.

Nov 18th

Saturday morning. Half six. Last night when I went to bed I was sort of hoping that maybe I just wouldn't wake up again but no, it's the day of the match and I'm still here. I just know I'm going to screw this up. I'll screw it up and we'll lose, and then Harry won't have any choice, he'll have to throw me off the team. I might as well just leave school now because nobody's ever going to speak to me again after today. She hates me. *Everyone* hates me. Harry will too in about four hours. If I could Apparate out of here right now I would.

Nov 19th

Too knackered to write anything last night! Had a completely *mental* day! We won the match! We WON! I was, frankly, *brilliant!* I thought Harry had given me lucky potion, but he hadn't, I did it all myself! She didn't believe I could do it, of course. She never does. I got this big lecture from her where she basically accused me of cheating, and I thought, sod her, I don't need this, I never win anything, and I'm going to bloody well celebrate. She's not going to ruin this for me as well. So I went upstairs to the common room and everyone was hugging each other and somehow, and I have *no* idea how this happened, I ended up *kissing Lavender Brown!!!* Or she kissed me, I'm not quite sure. Anyway, the point is there was kissing! So, HA! Fuck you, Ginny, you know nothing! It really was like I'd taken lucky potion today, like everything I did was going to go brilliantly. Malfoy and Vaisey were both off sick, the conditions were perfect, *everything* was perfect. And I tell you what, they stopped singing that song pretty damn quick once they realised they were losing! Ha!

Oh, I forgot to mention, later on in the evening Lavender says to me, "Do you want to go somewhere a bit more private?" and I think, "*Absofuckinglutely!*", so we go off to find an empty classroom, only the one we find turns out not to be empty after all. It turns out to have Harry and *her* in it. Lavender says, "Oops!" and lets go of my hand and backs out of the room, and we all stand there like lemons. Hermione looks really pissed off. She's in the middle of doing some spell or something with these little yellow canaries, and they're flying round her head like a bird-shaped halo and twittering, and that's the only sound in the room. It's really ridiculous. And meanwhile the three of us just stand there and eventually I crack – 'cos I can't stand silence - and say "Oh hi, Harry, I wondered where you'd got to!" Hermione stalks past me with a face like thunder and for maybe a second I think, thank Christ, that could have been a lot worse. And then she sets the canaries on me. I don't know if you've ever been attacked by canaries, (probably not, as you're a book), but those little fuckers have sharp beaks, I'm telling you. They don't even leave cool scars, I just look like I've got loads of paper cuts on my hands and arms. It's even worse on my face, I look like I cut myself shaving left-handed or something. Even the Murtlap essence didn't really help. I caught Malfoy looking at me and laughing, the little shit, but I thought, no, I'll rise above it. At some point before I leave school I really want to lamp him, and when I do it's not going to be over something like this. Anyway, fuck Malfoy, fuck Ginny, fuck her and her Bulgarian wanker of a boyfriend, fuck them *all*, I don't even care, I'm *going out* with Lavender! I've got a *girlfriend!* RULE!

Nov 22nd

Sorry I haven't written anything for a couple of days but I've been too busy *snogging the face off Lavender!* What the hell was I thinking, moping around after Hermione for so long? Wasting my time when I could have been doing *this instead!* Lavender's fantastic. She let me touch her, ah, *you know*, today. Oh, no, I didn't mean- not *that!* Just her tits! Just over her jumper as well, not like properly or anything. I didn't get to see them, she just let me put my hands over them and, you know, *touch* them. God, my face is getting all hot just *writing* this! It was a bit weird, actually. Good weird, but weird. Not as, um, *wobbly* as I expected! Not that I thought about it. Oh yeah, not *much*, Weasley! Well, you know, not that I thought about Lavender's, anyway. Obviously, I thought about, ah, *hers*. Anyway, the whole thing was a bit frustrating, mainly because we were in a freezing classroom and she was wearing about four layers of clothes. Bloody castle! My fingers were so cold I could hardly feel them, let alone anything else. Why can't we go to school somewhere hot where all the girls just wear t-shirts? Or bikinis, ha ha!

Now Lavender would *definitely* be the kind of girl who owns a bikini. Maybe if I'm still going out with her next summer I might even get to see her in it. God, that seems like ages away. I haven't really thought that far ahead, to be honest. I haven't thought about anything much beyond the end of this sentence. Frankly, I'm just amazed it's even lasted *this* long. I couldn't believe she even let me kiss her in the first place, I kept expecting a smack in the mouth. Jesus, I can't stop grinning! Six days ago everything was such a sack of shit, and *now...* I have a girlfriend. I have a *girlfriend!* And Lavender, of all people! She's way out of my league. Not that everybody isn't. But she's one of those girls that all the boys at school fancy, and for some mental reason she actually wants to go out with *me!* It's mad! I keep thinking she'll suddenly come to her senses and dump me: "Shit, I'm going out with Ron Weasley, how did *that* happen?"

Oh, yeah, I nearly forgot - afterwards we did this thing, it's like kissing, but you put your tongue in the other person's mouth. It's sort of disgusting, but quite good at the same time, do you know what I mean? Actually, it reminded me a bit of that time I tried to hex Malfoy and ended up coughing up slugs. Her tongue was all, eurgh, slippery and wet and stuff. I'm not really sure if I like it yet, but hey, I'm willing to give it another go! Mind you, I spent the whole time wishing she'd warned me in advance she was going to stick her tongue in my mouth so I could have brushed my teeth, and trying not to dribble on her, *and* trying not to laugh about the slug thing, so I probably wasn't really concentrating!

Oh, God, this is just *fantastic!* I wish I could tell Harry about it, but with things being like they are, I don't think he'd want to know. I suppose he doesn't want to take sides. I don't think he likes Lavender very much, to be honest. Every time she comes over he disappears. Well, he's always gone by the time I come up for air anyway! I feel a bit bad, but it's not my fault if I've got a girlfriend, is it? I didn't complain when he was going out with Cho. He should just be happy for me. Anyway, I don't want to think about all that. Everything's brilliant at the moment. I'm not going to let *her* ruin things just when everything's finally happening for me. Especially if Lavender's going to let me do stuff like she did today. Maybe next time I can get her down to only three layers of clothing, ha ha!

Nov 23rd

The absolute best thing about going out with Lavender is that I don't have to worry about saying something stupid in front of her. Why's that, Weasley? Because there's no time for talking! Ha HA!

Nov 24th

This has been the best week EVER! I can't believe it took me this long to realise there are actually other girls in this school who might be interested in me. Lavender's great, I can't believe I never really noticed her before now. She's alright looking. She obviously doesn't think I'm a loser like some people do. She doesn't spend all day in the library with her head stuck in a book. I'm not sure she even knows where the library *is*. She doesn't bang on about my fucking swearing all the time like *she* does either. She's a *laugh*. And anyway, Hermione can't complain, she's been off snogging Krum. She doesn't have any right to complain about me and Lavender. Actually, she should be grateful we're going out together, because now she can get off with that Bulgarian git who can't even pronounce her sodding name whenever she wants to. He's welcome to her. I really couldn't care less. She can do whatever she likes, she can get off with half the school if she wants, it's entirely nothing to do with me. I don't even care that she's still not talking to me. I don't care if she never speaks to me again. I couldn't give the slightest toss. She can't keep that up for ever, anyway, she'll have to crack eventually. In the meantime, I'm quite happy with Lavender, thanks very much. I can't wait 'til this year's finished, next year's gonna be great! New Year, New Ron!

Nov 25th

Ginny just had a go at me about Hermione. That's all I need. "Maybe if you just apologised! Just talk to her! You hate not speaking to her, you know you do!" I pointed out that it's Hermione who's not speaking to me, not the other way around. Ginny obviously just feels guilty because she realises it's all her fault for telling me about Hermione and Krum in the first place. Anyway, there's no way I'm apologising. What have I got to apologise for? I'm not the one who went off and snogged someone else. Well, I am, but she did it first. It's completely different. If anything, she should apologise to *me*.

Nov 26th

Just come back from an entire evening spent snogging Lavender in a cleaning cupboard, woo hoo! It was going alright 'til I knocked a bottle of cleaning fluid off the shelf with my elbow, and it smashed and went absolutely everywhere and completely soaked our feet. I started laughing because, well, it was *funny*, but Lavender didn't think so, she just shouted, "These are new shoes, Ron!" Which just made me laugh even louder, which pissed her off even more. She said, "They're from Italy!" Like that

would mean anything to me at all. I said, trying to calm her down, "Mine are ruined as well," and she said, "*How can you tell?*" I was still laughing too much to be offended. My shoes aren't new, not by a long way, and they definitely aren't Italian, what's the point of getting upset about it? I said, "They're only shoes!", which was clearly the wrong thing to say because then she took off her shoe and started whacking me on the shoulder with it, shouting, "What's the point in even trying to make myself look nice for you?" and "It's not funny! Stop laughing!", but I'd totally lost it by this point and was almost weeping, I was laughing so much. She got fed up with me in the end and stormed off. I don't know why she didn't think it was funny. I'm still laughing about it now!

Nov 27th

Bloody Ginny. Why can't she just leave it? She cornered me after Quidditch practice today and practically demanded, "Are you going to sort out this nonsense with Hermione or not?" I said, "What are you, my mum?" She went off on one about how supposedly Hermione is really miserable and she knows *I* am - how does she know? Anyway, it's not true, I'm perfectly happy with Lavender. And I'm sure Hermione doesn't care either way. She's the one who got off with Viktor Krum, I bet she hasn't given me a second's thought. It's really pathetic actually, this whole not talking to me thing. Really, she's just embarrassing herself. She should just be happy for me. I'm happy with Lavender, so she should be happy I'm happy. That's what *friends* are supposed to do. Anyway, it's not my problem. If she's got a problem with it, that's her tough luck. I'm going out with Lavender now, I've moved on. That thing with Slughorn's party was just as friends anyway. She never said it was anything else. She should have said if she meant anything by it. It's not my fault, I'm not a mind-reader. She should have said. I don't even want to go to the stupid party anyway. I bet it'll be rubbish. I'm sure me and Lavender can find something much better to do with our time, ha ha!

Nov 28th

Just bumped into Hermione in the corridor. I was in a pretty good mood, so I said hello to her like the idiot I am. Of course, she just acted like I hadn't spoken as usual, so I snapped and shouted, "Fine! Fuck off, then!" She turned around and gave me this really dirty look and said, sarcastically, "Lavender must be so proud!" then walked off. I was so shocked I couldn't think of anything to say to that, I just stared after her. What the hell did she mean by that? Well, I *know* what she meant by that, I know *exactly* what she bloody meant! She's got a boyfriend, what, am I not allowed to have a

girlfriend now? Am I not good enough to have a girlfriend? That's what she meant, that I'm obviously such a total loser that the idea that anyone might actually fancy me and might actually want to go out with me is completely ridiculous! "*Lavender must be so proud!*" Who does she think she is? Just because she's going out with Krum, suddenly she's better than we are? Yeah, well, maybe Lavender *is* proud to be going out with me! Maybe Lavender doesn't care that I'm not a famous International Quidditch player with loads of money and girls after him, maybe she just likes me for me! "*Lavender must be so proud!*" Unbelievable! Aaargh, I want to hit something! Where's Malfoy when you need him? That would make me feel better, I'm sure. Actually, I know exactly what would make me feel better. I have a girlfriend. I have a girlfriend who actually likes me and doesn't think I'm an idiot, and –

Well, that made me feel *loads* better. No, I'm kidding. If anything, I think I actually feel *worse* nowBecause I'm so angry about the argument with Hermione that I rush off and find Lavender and insist that we go for a walk, *right now*. She giggles and says, "Ooh, you're being very forceful! Can't get enough of me?" I snap, "*Come on!*" and practically drag her out of the common room by the hand and into the nearest empty classroom where I spend half an hour trying to get my hand up her top, and she spends half an hour pushing it away again. After about the hundredth time I get so annoyed I just think, sod it, I don't even care, and have a go at getting it up her skirt instead. She shoves me away and snaps, "Don't! Not yet!" I say, sarcastically, "What, is there a *timetable* or something?" She says, "Don't laugh at me!" I say, nastily, "I'm not laughing, I just think it's funny that you're shoving your tits in my face but I'm not allowed to actually do anything." Instantly, her eyes fill up with tears, which makes me feel like a total arsehole. Yeah, yeah, hate me if you want to, but if it helps, carry on reading, I'm getting my comeuppance in, ooh, about two minutes...

Because then she says, to my absolute amazement, "I'm sorry... I'm just not ready... I... I've never *done it* before, that's all... can you... can you *wait*?" I actually do start laughing then, and she obviously misunderstands because she gets all indignant and says, "It's not funny!" Oh, it is. It really is. The idea that Lavender "*Do you think my skirt's too short?*" Brown might actually think that I'm not so desperately uncool that I might have had a girlfriend before her - maybe several! - and that I might actually have done it with them, is absolutely fucking hilarious. Me, with my all of *ten days* experience of kissing girls! And *she's* not ready? Oh, the irony! I tell her, "I'm not laughing at you. I just always assumed you *had* done it, that's all." She says, "Did you? Why?" and I instantly realise I've said the wrong thing. Again. "Sorry, I just assumed. Look, it wasn't *just* me! All the boys ass- oh,

shit..." "Oh, so everyone thinks I'm a *slut*, is that what you're saying?" Me, backtracking madly: "No, no, it's just because, you know, you're pretty and popular and we thought - *I* thought you must have had loads of boyfriends, that's all..." She shouts, furiously, "I've had two boyfriends! Two!" The look on her face is so dangerous I decide that desperate measures are called for. It's time for the traditional Ron Weasley sacrifice-my-dignity moment. I shrug and say, "Well, you're still two up on me, then, because I haven't even had *one*." That cheers her up straight away, as I thought it might. She looks almost as astonished as I did when she asked if I could *wait*. "You've never had a girlfriend?" "No. You're my first." She starts laughing then. "Oh, my God! That explains so *much!*"

I don't ask her what she means by that, but now I'm starting to wonder about it. What does that explain? Am I doing something wrong? I mean, apart from the travesty that is this evening. Anyway, so then she says, "You're *not* going to tell me I was your first *kiss* as well?" She says it in the same incredulous way you might say, "There are *mice* living on *Saturn*!?" I nod and she laughs so much at that one she has to hold onto the wall for support. "Sorry, Ron... it's not funny, not really... well, it *is*... it's sweet..." I try and raise a smile, but strangely enough, the whole thing has stopped being funny. I've gone from nearly getting my hand in her bra to being "sweet" in the space of two minutes. Awesome. She wipes her eyes and says, "Thanks, that's made me feel loads better!" I say, "Glad to help" but she misses the sarcasm. She says, putting her arms around my neck and getting that annoying coy look back on her face, "So that means we'll be each other's *first time*... that's really *romantic*..." and she leans up to kiss me. Meanwhile I get this instant picture in my head the second she says that of myself with Hermione. *With* Hermione.

Why can't I stop thinking about her? She hates me and she thinks I'm a loser and even though I'm with Lavender now, she's still in my head. She's still ruining everything. Well, I'm just not going to let her, that's all. She's got a boyfriend, why does she even care what I do? She's got no right. So I'm just not going to think about her anymore. She doesn't even exist, as far as I'm concerned. She treats me like *I* don't exist, so that's how I'm gonna treat *her* from now on. Hermione who? HA!

Nov 29th

Saw Lavender and Parvati at breakfast this morning and they both burst into giggles when they saw me coming. Parvati said, "Hi, Ron!" and Lavender nudged her and whispered, "Shh, it's not funny!" I couldn't believe it. I said, "Did you *tell* her?" She said, "Sorry, was it supposed to be

a secret? It's only Parvati!", and then Parvati said, "Well, I think it's sweet!" and they both giggled again. Spectacular. I don't want to be sweet. Neville's sweet. I'm not sweet. Sweet boys don't try to get their hands in your bra. I'm definitely not fucking sweet.

Nov 30th

So it turns out that Lavender first kissed a boy when she was twelve. *Twelve!* I wished I'd never asked. (Her: "Well, I've always been mature for my age..." Me: "Yeah, but *twelve!*") Apparently, he was a fifteen year old French exchange student called Philippe. Of course he was. What is it with these bloody foreign boys? They come over here with their stupid accents and their nice hair and they can't even pronounce your sodding *name* properly, and all the girls fall at their feet like they're God's gift or something! What's wrong with English boys anyway? OK, don't answer that...

Oh, and apparently I *am* doing something wrong, because later we were in yet another empty classroom doing, you know, *stuff*, and she said, sarcastically, "You're not kneading *bread*, you know." I said, mortified, "*What?*" Feeling my face burning up. She said, "And I know you're a goalkeeper, but you don't have to grab them like you're catching the Quaffle, either." I mumbled an apology, but all I kept thinking was, she's going straight back to tell Parvati about this. Shit, maybe she already did, maybe Parvati said she should tell me. No, don't tell me. Really, don't. I'd rather not know. Actually, I'd rather you didn't talk to your sodding friends about it in the first place. I mean, do they all sit around in the girls' dormitory having a good laugh about it or what? Oh. The girls' dormitory. She wouldn't say anything in front of Hermione, would she? Oh God, she might. She probably doesn't realise there's any reason not to. Not that there *is* any reason. Not any more, anyway. She knows we've had a row, though. Which is putting it mildly. Yeah, she wouldn't say anything. Parvati's one thing, but if she said anything in front of Hermione... I don't really care what she thinks anymore, but I still don't want her knowing about all of that stuff. Especially if Lavender's going round telling people I suck at this. I mean, give me a break, I've only been doing it for ten days! Less for the, ah, touching. I might turn out to be really good at it. You wouldn't expect to score a goal the first time you got on a broom, would you? I probably just need more practice! Maybe I should tell her I used to be rubbish at Quidditch as well but I won the cup last year, so I'm obviously a late developer. Yeah, I think she might have spotted that already, Ron. And you're *still* pretty rubbish at Quidditch, so maybe it might not be the best idea to remind her about it, you *muppet*...

DECEMBER

Dec 1st

I seem to have a special talent for pissing girls off. We were in the common room earlier, you know, snogging, and Hermione must have walked past because I just heard "Honestly!" and Lavender whipped her head away and hissed after her, "Oh grow up, you stupid cow!". And before I could stop myself I said, "Don't talk to her like that", and Lavender looked absolutely furious. There was no more snogging after that.

Dec 2nd

So tonight, I'm busy snogging Lavender when I hear Hermione's voice nearby and I guess I must have stopped or something, because Lavender punches me really hard in the arm. I say, "What was that for?" and she says, "You *know* what that was for," and she's right, I do, so I don't push the argument. And about ten minutes later exactly the same thing happens, only this time she kicks me in the shin. And I say, "Ow!" and she says, "You're lucky I didn't kick you anywhere worse," and suggests we go for a walk instead. So we end up walking around the Quidditch pitch for an hour in the freezing cold and in complete silence because she's still pissed off with me, and eventually I pretend I have an essay to finish so I can come back inside and get back some of the feeling in my legs. I'm sure Hermione would be delighted to know she's ruined our evening. Not that I need her help. I'm obviously quite capable of stuffing that up on my own.

Dec 3rd

Lavender and I had a fight. She called Hermione a cow again and I must have looked pissed off or something because she went, "WHAT?" and I said "What?" and she said, "I can't believe you're actually defending her!". I said, "I didn't say anything!" and she said, "She hasn't even spoken to you for two weeks!" I tried to calm her down by saying I didn't care about Hermione not speaking to me and she said, "You've got a funny way of showing it!" I said, "What's that supposed to mean?" and she said, "You're always going on about her! Yesterday you said it was pathetic that she was still blanking you and that she should just get over it. You went on about it for ages." Jesus, does she remember everything I say so she can use it against me later? I said, "I never called her a cow, though" and she started shouting then. "She *IS* a cow! I thought she was supposed to be your friend! She hasn't said two words to you in two weeks! Anyway, you can bet she's said a lot worse things about you! I'm supposed to be your

girlfriend, remember?" And then loads more along the same lines. I stopped listening. Bloody hell. Remind me never to mention Hermione in front of Lavender again. It just causes grief.

Dec 4th

Ginny says she's sure if I just apologised to Hermione we could be friends again. What's the point? It's gone beyond that now. She's never going to speak to me again, no matter what I say. I keep telling her I'm happy with Lavender now, and Ginny keeps telling me I'm not. Because she knows everything, obviously. I told her to stop interfering, and she shouted, "Well, somebody needs to, because you're really making a pig's ear of things on your own, aren't you?" and flounced off. Jesus, what with her having a go at me every five minutes, Hermione not even speaking to me, and Lavender just generally driving me up the wall, all I need now is my bloody mum to join in and that's all the women in my life who think I'm an arsehole...

Dec 5th

There's definitely something wrong with me. I'm in the common room tonight and Lavender's got her tongue in my mouth and I'm not even enjoying it 'cos I'm thinking about *her*. It's worse if she's actually in the room, cause then I'm desperate to look round at her and funny enough that's kind of distracting. I'm really not concentrating on the job in hand. I must be the worst kisser in the *world*. Why can't I just enjoy it? Right, let's sort this out once and for all:

Lavender vs. Hermione: Lavender likes snogging. Lavender actually fancies me. Hermione doesn't even *like* me at the moment. *Lavender wins!*

Lavender vs. Hermione: Hermione hates me. Hermione won't even look at me. Hermione thinks I'm the worst person that ever lived. Hermione will never think of me as anything other than her stupid friend who always says the wrong thing. Hermione turns me into a moping idiot. *Lavender wins!*

Lavender vs. Hermione: Hermione has a five year head start. Hermione is wonderful. Hermione got off with Viktor Krum. *Lavender wins!*

Lavender v. Hermione: What thehell are you complaining about, you idiot? You're finally getting some snogging action, shut up and be grateful! So yeah, Lavender vs. Hermione: *Lavender wins.* Obviously!

Dec 6th

Did I mention that Lavender wears kiwi fruit lipbalm? It tastes sort of plasticky. And Merlin, that stuff is sticky! I can never get it off my mouth for hours afterwards. It's like my lips are glued together. Drives me *nuts*.

Dec 7th

Okay, ignore everything I've been saying about her, I don't know what I'm talking about. Lavender's great! We missed lunch today but it was totally worth it, because we went down by the greenhouses where there was nobody around, and she lifted up her top and showed me her bra!!! She was wearing this fantastic pale blue lacy type thing, I was just... wow. She wouldn't let me do anything, though. She just sort of went "Here you go, have a look", and then pulled her shirt back down again before I could even stick my hand out. But still... wow... I was so wired afterwards I really wanted to tell someone, but there wasn't anyone to tell. I can't talk to Harry anymore. Not about this, anyway. All I've got is *you*, dear Diary, and no offence or anything, but you're a bit rubbish. Would you mind just saying, "Oh my God, you lucky sod, what was it *like*?" No? Oh, alright. It was awesome, since you're not asking. I've still got that picture in my head now, her lifting her top up and - *Oh God*. I really really really really wanted to touch them but I didn't like to ask. I've had itchy hands all afternoon. Like they know there's something better they could be doing. Talking of which, an early night for me tonight, I think! You didn't really want to know that, did you?!?

Heh. I've just thought: I know I joked about Lavender having a timetable the other day, but I wouldn't be at all surprised if she actually has got one. Week One: Introduction to Snogging. Week Two: Touching the chest over the jumper. Week Three: I'll show you my bra but keep your filthy hands off please. Can't wait for Week Ten! It'll be the first time I've ever looked forward to coming back to school after Christmas, I can tell you. Can't wait to see what my Christmas present is either! Do you know what *Hermione* got me for Christmas last year? A homework planner to help with my exam revision. Every time you opened it it said things like, "Do it today or tomorrow you'll pay!" I got her a really expensive bottle of perfume that cost me more than half of my entire Christmas money and she got me a talking homework planner. You'd think I'd have read the signs, wouldn't you? "BeWise - ReVise!", that was another one. Who buys nagging Christmas presents? It was like having her standing behind me all the time, leaning over my shoulder and telling me I'd got Question 3 wrong. "Have fun when work's done!" No. Have fun *now*. Panic later. That's a much

better motto, don't you think? I should get that on a tattoo. Lavender would never have bought me something like that. At least she's a laugh. I mean, alright, she can be a little bit annoying, but then so can I. So can everyone. Hermione had her moments. Lavender showed me her bra. It's no contest, is it?

Dec 8th

I swear Lavender is *trying* to wind me up. I stopped mentioning Hermione because she got annoyed about it and now she keeps bringing up the subject herself. This evening I got, "I don't know what *she's* got to look so pleased with herself about" and then later on, "Who'd even want to kiss her, anyway?", which I'm afraid sent me into a ten minute daydream where I was doing just that. Oh, Lavender, if only you knew!

Dec 9th

Lavender is always asking these annoying questions like "Do you like my shoes?" and "Did you notice I'm wearing new earrings?" Of course I haven't noticed, I'm a boy! Anyway she doesn't really want to know what I think, she just wants me to say "Yeah, they're really nice". I don't even really need to hear the question. If I'm not careful she'll ask me something completely different like "Did you finish your essay for Potions?" and I'll say "Yeah, they're really nice" and get caught out! I mean, obviously I knew I had this fantastic ability to always say the worst thing possible, but with Lavender it's like I'm doing it on purpose or something. Like today I was in the common room talking to Harry and didn't see her coming over until she sat down really hard in my lap. I said, without thinking, "Jesus, you weigh a ton!", which funny enough didn't go down too well. I just don't know how you're supposed to talk to your girlfriend, that's my trouble. Not the same way you talk to your mates, obviously. I know I'm supposed to pay her little compliments and stuff but it just makes me feel like an idiot. The other night she was blatantly angling for a compliment from me: "Do you like my hair?" "Yeah, it's really nice." "What do you like about it?" "Um... it's really...er... it's... er... it's really *blonde*?" She said, sarcastically, "Yeah, *thanks*." I am *rubbish* at flirting. If I could keep a straight face it would probably help, but I start laughing, and then she just thinks I'm taking the piss. Or she says, and this really makes me laugh, "You're only saying that because you know I want you to say it!" Can you believe that? Well, of course I'm only saying it because you want me to! Why else would I say it? I can't win!

She keeps needling me about Hermione as well. She's really obvious about it. She'll say something sarcastic about her and then wait to see my reaction. Sometimes I just agree with her for a quiet life and then she always looks really pleased with herself and sits there with her arms folded and a smug expression on her stupid face. Sometimes I refuse to rise to it and say nothing, and then she'll keep at it, digging away with her little comments for the rest of the evening. I've started doing that running commentary in my head again, only this time it's about her not me: "For Merlin's sake will you just shut up?" "Blah blah blah", "What do you want now?", "Could you *be* more stupid?", "I'm smiling but I'm not even listening!", "Keep talking and I'm gonna have to hex my own ears off". That can't be a good sign, can it? Poor Lavender. She's driving me crazy, one day at a time.

Dec 10th

So tonight, I am snogging Lavender when suddenly I am thinking about Hermione, realise it's not her I'm with, get confused and forget how to kiss. You know how sometimes you go past a group of girls and you forget how to walk? Like that. Anyway, I forget how to kiss, and accidentally bite Lavender on the lip. So then she obviously thinks I'm some sort of pervert despite me telling her about twenty million times that it was an accident. Later on I see her with Parvati and they keep whispering to each other and glancing over at me when they think I'm not looking. Parvati gives me a really hard stare. Jesus. Do they talk to each other about *everything*? The last thing I need is for them to be talking about me in the girls' dorm and for Hermione to overhear and think I am some sort of weirdo. More than she does already, anyway.

Dec 11th

Me and Lavender always seem to have these little three minute rows about *nothing*. Like today, I see her at breakfast, and the first thing she says to me is, "What's that on your sleeve?" I look down. It is custard. She shakes her head and tutts. She says, "How the hell do you manage to get so dirty by only eight o' clock in the morning?" I tell her, "I get up early" and laugh, and Parvati, who is sitting opposite, laughs too, but Lavender doesn't get the joke. She says, "That must have been there since at least yesterday!" I say, "Yeah, and this is yesterday's shirt, so that explains it, doesn't it?" She sighs loudly. She says, "You drive me mad sometimes" and ruffles my hair, which I *hate*. I deliberately smooth it back down again and that annoys her as well - I suppose it's a bit like wiping your mouth after someone's kissed

you. I think, "You drive me bananas as well, love" but obviously I don't say this out loud.

And then tonight, I am sitting with her in the common room but we're not really talking to each other. I'm staring at the blank roll of parchment that is supposed to be my Charms essay and Lavender is reading an Astrology magazine. She says, "When's your birthday?" I tell her it's March the 1st. She says, all excited for some reason, "Oh, that means you're a water sign!" I give her a not-interested stare. Tragically, it doesn't stop her spending the next fifteen minutes explaining what it means to be a water sign, while I sit there and nod every couple of minutes. Then I remember what Hermione thinks about Astrology - that's it's basically a load of rubbish - and this makes me laugh out loud. Lavender asks what I'm laughing at. I tell her sorry, I must have misheard, and she looks at me suspiciously as though she can read my mind. Thank the merciful Jesus she can't! Anyway, she carries on talking about Astrology and I sit there bored out of my tree and look around the common room where it seems like absolutely everyone else apart from me is having a hilarious time. There's no sign of Harry or Hermione. I hardly see much of either of them these days. Every time Lavender comes over Harry mysteriously vanishes, and obviously if I see H & H together, I can't go over and just talk to him. I tried it a few times but *she* would always say something sarcastic to me and then flounce off. It's a total pain in the arse, to be honest. Hey, why can't we all be friends? Yeah, I know. Never gonna happen. Probably wouldn't really want it to.

Dec 12th

I'm in the common room earlier with Lavender and Parvati, and they start talking about Hermione right in front of me. Lavender says in a really loud whisper, "If I had hair like that I wouldn't go out in public without a balaclava! No wonder she can't get a boyfriend!" and they both laugh. She goes on, "You'd think she'd at least put a bit of make-up on or something. Mind you, she'd need a trowel!" They crack up at that one. I notice my hands have bunched into fists and have to shove them in my pockets so Lavender doesn't see. Parvati says, "She's lucky she's so good at spells - I bet that's how she got that Quidditch player to go to the ball with her! He was probably Confunded!" They cackle like mad. Lavender has got her hand on my thigh all the way through this conversation and keeps glancing at me out of the corner of her eye to see my reaction. She goes on, "God, look at her!" We all look at her. She's reading a book at a table on the other side of the common room and absent-mindedly chewing her quill. My stomach lurches. Lavender says, "She's the only person in this room who's

not enjoying themselves! Have you ever seen anyone look more miserable?" I think, she doesn't look miserable, she's just reading. She loves reading. She looks lovely. Lavender is still talking but I'm just watching Hermione reading. She hasn't noticed us staring at her, thank God. Lavender nudges me hard in the ribs. I go, "What?" She says, helpfully, "What do you think?"

I have no idea what she's talking about and tell her this. She rolls her eyes and sighs and says, "Do you want to go for a *walk*?" She says *walk* as though it's a secret code between us that no-one will ever guess. God, she's stupid. I catch Parvati's eye and she looks really embarrassed. I'm not feeling much affection for Lavender either at this moment. I say, "Can't, got stuff to do." She looks upset and says, "I didn't really mean a *walk*..." I say, sarcastically, "Yeah, I think I managed to work that one out. Still got stuff to do. Sorry!" and get up and actually go for a *walk* on my own. Unfortunately it's so bloody cold out I have to come back inside after ten minutes, especially as I went out without my coat. I don't want to go back to the common room so I end up going to the library, of all places. This doesn't really help take my mind off her, funnily enough. Every time the door opens I look up hopefully in case it's her, but it never is.

Dec 13th

Sunday night of a long depressing weekend. Snowing all yesterday so we've been stuck inside. Today, just to get out of the common room, I grudgingly go for a walk in the snow with Lavender. I am freezing my arse off. She tries to get me interested in a snowball fight, but I'm not having any of it. I'm being a moody sod. When her fourth snowball hits me in the back of the head I just say, "Leave it out, Lavender" and she looks annoyed. Five minutes later she's lying on her back making a snow angel and trying to get me to join her. I'm sure she must have heard somewhere that it would be, urgh, *romantic*. She's trying to get my attention and not succeeding: "Ron! Look! Look what I'm doing! *Look!*" I just stand there with my hands wedged very firmly in my pockets and stare off at the castle. I'm thinking about Hermione. Of course I am, what else would I be thinking about? I'm thinking about how she loves the snow and how different it would be if I was out here with her instead of Lavender. I'm wondering if that'll ever happen again. That walk we went on in the Autumn when I thought I might kiss her seems like a million years ago. I realise you can probably see us from some of the windows in Gryffindor tower and the thought of her watching us makes me pull my scarf up over my mouth. Then Lavender snaps, "Are you going to help me up or what?" and I come back down to earth with a bump. I grudgingly give Lavender my hand and

pull her up and she takes the opportunity to not give it back again, like I knew she would. She giggles and says, "Shall we go down by the lake? *Nobody will be able to see us from the castle...*" I shake my head. "No offence, Lavender, but I can't actually feel my toes, can't we just go back inside?" She pouts and says, "You're just worried you won't be able to resist me!" I say, dryly, "Yeah, that's it." and she giggles again and obviously doesn't realise I'm being sarcastic. She says, "Well, I guess I'll just have to think of some other way to get you warmed up!" Me, trying to keep a straight face, "How about a nice cup of tea?" She elbows me in the ribs. "Silly!" "Yeah, you're right, that *is* silly." (Comedy pause) "Maybe a coffee..." She frowns. "I thought you didn't drink coffee?" "I don't." "Well, why would you want one, then?" I really want to roll my eyes, but manage to resist. Jesus, do I have to spell it out every time? It. Was. A. Joke. A *joke!* I just grit my teeth and mutter, "Never mind."

So we start walking back to the castle, her hanging on to my arm, me walking so fast she practically has to run to keep up: "Slow down! Wait!" "Well, come on then, before my bloody feet fall off!" Then she notices I've got my scarf over my face and starts in on that as well: "Why d'you have to wear that awful scarf?" I tell her it's my Chudley Cannons scarf. She says it looks as though it's never been washed. I say, with some pride, "That's because it hasn't." She looks appalled. She wants to know how long I've had it - about eight years - and says, "I can't believe you've had it that long and you've never washed it! That's disgusting!" I shrug and say, "Who washes scarves anyway?" She says, "Everyone does! I tell you what, why don't you let me buy you a nice new one for Christmas? Then you can chuck that one in the bin where it belongs."

She beams at me and obviously expects me to be all grateful about it. I just give her a hard stare. Actually, I *like* it. My dad bought it for me when he took me to my first Quidditch match. It's one of the few things I own that was once new and wasn't a hand-me-down from one of my brothers. Dad said I could have a scarf or a programme and I really really wanted the scarf. Now of course I wish I'd got the programme, because I could have got another scarf any time, but the programme was for that day only, and I'm never going to be able to find another one. It was a great match as well. They came back from 100-nil down and ended up winning the match by only ten points. I cheered and booed and sang and shouted myself nearly hoarse, it was just the most exciting thing I'd ever seen in my life. Afterwards Dad took me for an ice-cream and told me they hadn't won the League Cup in nearly a century and were generally considered the worst team in England, so I decided it must be my lucky scarf that made them win. Look, I was eight, it made sense at the time! Anyway, that's why I've

never washed it. They still haven't won the League - over a century and counting - but I'm not taking any risks. What if I washed it and they hit an even worse losing streak? I'm not having that on my conscience.

Of course, I don't tell Lavender any of this. I don't think she'd get it, somehow. She goes on, "And it clashes really badly with your hair! Couldn't you have got a blue one or something?" That makes me laugh, and me laughing annoys her. I explain that no, I couldn't have got a blue one, because the team colour is *orange*. And I don't give a shit if it clashes with my hair, and I don't see why she should be bothered about it if I'm not. She says she's not bothered, but I should be, or don't I care what I look like? I don't really want to have this conversation anymore. Do I care that all my clothes are hand-me-downs or are too short for me or were knitted by my mum? Yeah, of course I bloody care, but I learnt a long time ago that since I can't do anything about it, there's not much point. I just pretend not to. If Malfoy had said what Lavender's just said, I'd have smacked him one. To her I just say, "No, I'm not bothered, actually." She shakes her head and sighs loudly, and I make an extremely childish V-sign behind her back when she's not looking. Well done, mate, that's told *her*.

I wish I could be bothered to try harder with Lavender. Truth is, I just find her really boring a lot of the time. I thought having a girlfriend would be all just snogging like it was the first couple of weeks but tragically, it isn't. The other night we were out on the Quidditch pitch about five minutes into what promised to be a marathon session and I was quite happy, thanks very much, when she pulled away and said four little words that sent a chill up my spine: "*Can't we just talk?*" God, no! If all I wanted to do was just talk, I wouldn't be going out with her, that's for sure, 'cos she doesn't half talk some rubbish. At least Hermione wasn't boring. Getting off with Bulgarian Quidditch players all over the place, yes. Boring, no. Just talk! I've already got people for that. That's what Harry's for. That's what my *friends* are for. But she seems to think I should want to spend every waking second hanging around with her instead. Like yesterday, I was in the common room talking to Harry and she came running up and threw her arms around my neck and actually lifted her feet off the ground as well, so she nearly pulled me over. *Really* annoying.

Harry automatically leant down to pick up his bag as usual. I said, "You don't have to leave!" and he stopped, and might have changed his mind, but then Lavender said, "Yes, Harry, don't go!" in a tone that both me and him clearly understood to actually mean "fuck off!" Harry mumbled some excuse about wanting to go and talk to Jimmy Peakes about the next match anyway, and I tried to look apologetic. Soon as he'd gone she

turned to me and said, "Oh, God, can't you talk about anything else except Quidditch!" I said, "Well, what do you want me to talk about?" She said, "Anything! It's like you'd rather talk about Quidditch with your mates than talk to your *girlfriend!*" I thought, yeah, well, *obviously...* and stupidly tried to make a joke of it: "Well, that's what you get when you go out with a Quidditch star, love!" I got a punch in the arm for that one. She said I was always taking the piss out of her. I said no, I wasn't, she was overreacting. She said, and I quote, "I thought you were a right laugh until I started going out with you, but actually you're just really moody all the time." That kind of shocked me a bit, actually. Anyway, she's wrong. I was moody before I started going out with her, she just didn't know me well enough to realise it. Harry could have told her that. So could Ginny. I've always been a bit of a moody sod, I'm just a lot worse lately because of the Hermione situation. I'm half moody and half hilarious. Well, it's hard to keep up this level of comedy all the time, you know, I'd have a seizure!

Lavender's problem is that she takes it all so personally. If she just let me be I'd be alright in a bit, but she always has to keep niggling away: "But what do you *mean?*" I don't know what I mean. If I knew what I meant half the time I'd be a lot smarter than I am! Sometimes I say things just to get a laugh, doesn't mean I actually mean them. I wish I could stop myself but it's like I get carried away and I can see the punchline and I've just got to get to it, even though I know it's going to go down like a lead balloon or I'm going to offend someone, or get myself in trouble. I just can't help it. Then I get, "Why did you have to say that?" I don't know! I just had to! "Because it was funny" obviously isn't much of an answer when you've just upset someone. Hermione always knew to just ignore me when I was being an idiot. She was very good at that. "Stop showing off!" "Have you been eating too many sweets again?" "Calm down!" Always made me feel a bit like a little kid with a crush on a teacher. Especially as she had this way of telling me off that always reminded me of McGonagall telling me to take my hands out of my pockets and tuck my shirt in: "You are representing Gryffindor, Mr. Weasley!" Hey, I even made McGonagall laugh once! Well, the corners of her mouth turned up a bit anyway. Only took me three years! With Lavender it's almost *too* easy. She likes the silly stuff. Where's the challenge in that? Anybody can fall over and get a laugh. I can do that without even trying, especially with feet like mine.

Do you know what I've just realised? Lavender doesn't even really get my jokes. It's like getting a laugh out of Luna, it doesn't count if she doesn't really get it. She's laughing, but just because she thinks she should, because it's obviously the punchline. Because I'm supposed to be funny - well, alright, but not *everything* I say is funny, you don't have to laugh all

the time. Sometimes I just want to say, "What did I say that was funny?" because I sure as hell don't know. I don't *want* to be funny all the time. I would actually like to be taken fucking seriously now and then. At least Hermione only laughed if she thought it was actually funny. Which was not very often, let's face it. Mostly I just got her legendary "That's-not-funny-Ron" frown. Even that was cute, damn her. But when she *did...* she had the best laugh. Had. Past tense. I don't suppose I'll ever see or hear it again now. I always thought, if I can make *her* laugh, then that's worth extra points. Harry will laugh at anything. So will I, come to that. You can never tell what Hermione will laugh at. You can try all you like, and *nothing*, and then one stupid random thing you say will do it and it's always fantastic, like this thrill, almost: *I did that. I made that.* Making someone laugh is one of the best feelings in the world, I promise you. Making Hermione laugh is *the* best feeling. I once made her laugh so much that pumpkin juice came out of her nose. Lavender vs. Hermione: Lavender actually fancies me. Lavender likes snogging. Lavender is not Hermione. Oh.

Dec 14th

I have NO idea what I'm doing. Remind me, why did I get off with Lavender again? If you'd told me three weeks ago when I was all stupid and happy about Lavender fancying me that I'd be in this position I'd have laughed at you. What kind of fuckwit gets off with a girl he doesn't even really like and then spends all the time - and I mean *all* the time - that he's snogging her, thinking about another girl instead? Lavender! What was I *thinking*? I mean, I quite like the kissing and all, I'm not gay, but it's like I'm doing it and I'm not even really there, in my head. Do you know what I mean? I'm kissing her but I'm thinking about, *you know*. And - I never thought I'd say this about anyone except myself - Lavender is really thick. I honestly can't think of anything to say to her and everything she says to me just makes me cringe. She has these little pet names for me that make me want to chew off my own hand. I'm not even going to tell you what *they* are, I'm dying of embarrassment just thinking about it. Actually, you know what? I don't even *really* like the kissing anymore. It's not how I thought it would be. I don't seem to know what to do with my mouth, or where my nose is supposed to go. My mind keeps wandering off. Even when I'm not thinking about *her*, I'm thinking about something else instead. The other night I realised I'd spent a good ten minutes when I really should have been paying attention to the job in hand, working out tactics for the next match instead. I expect I'm a rubbish kisser and that's why it's not as good as it should be, but then she doesn't seem to have noticed. Maybe she's a crap kisser as well. Maybe she doesn't know any better. I suppose at least it's practice for, you know, the next person who's unlucky enough to get kissed

by me. Yeah, if you look at it like that, it's a bit like Quidditch. I'm mostly rubbish at that as well, but with enough practice (or luck!), I'm alright. I'm no Viktor Krum, that's for sure.

I just don't get why she likes him! Alright, I suppose he's famous, and he's got loads of girls after him, and he's quite good-looking if you like that sort of thing, and he's probably loaded and a fantastic kisser and doesn't always say exactly the wrong thing at the wrong time. I'd almost rather it was someone like Malfoy, at least I know I'm better than that little tosser. But Krum - what have I got to offer compared to him? Oh, I'm tall! Big fucking deal. I'm like the reverse Viktor Krum! I'm crap at Quidditch, apparently I'm crap at kissing, I'm crap at lessons... She always has to help me with my bloody homework like I'm backward or something. My brothers are all smarter and cooler and better than me. Everyone's smarter and cooler and better than me. I'm just the one who makes stupid jokes. I am a stupid joke. Oh *shut up*, Weasley. Enough with your bloody whining. No-one gives a shit about your pathetic problems, you *loser*.

Dec 15th

Just had a run-in with Ginny. I really wasn't in the mood for her today. She seems to think she can sort out everyone else's problems: "Why don't you just talk to her? I know you miss her!" I told her where she could stick it. She's right, of course, but I'm damned if I'm going to give her the satisfaction of admitting it. Anyway, what's the difference? Hermione obviously hates me. Slughorn's party is in four days. If all this hadn't happened, I could be going to it with her, instead of sitting up here moaning about it. I am such a fucking idiot.

Dec 16th

I'm hiding in my room like the coward I am. I just couldn't face another evening with Lavender. She grabbed me the second I got into the common room this evening and started mauling me about. I pretended I had a stomach ache. Yeah, I'm aware that's ridiculous. If only I had Harry's invisibility cloak! Mind you, it's a bit short for me these days. I'd have to crouch. That would be really dignified, wouldn't it? As opposed to hiding up here pretending I'm ill, obviously. Yeah, dignity is my middle name.

Dec 17th

Made the mistake of trying to talk to Hermione today. Don't know why I bothered. Complete waste of time. We were all leaving the greenhouse

after Herbology and walking back up the path through the snow to the castle. She'd stayed behind for five minutes to speak to Professor Sprout, and I'd hung about taking a ridiculous amount of time to put my books away and pretending to tie my shoelaces. I suppose I was hoping, like an idiot, that maybe I could get up the nerve to speak to her and she wouldn't bite my head off. Anyway, I followed about twenty feet behind her, but I had to walk really slowly so I didn't catch her up. Unfortunately she looked round and saw me and started running, but because she wasn't looking where she was going she tripped and went sprawling in the snow and everything flew out of her bag and got scattered all over the place. I hurried over and asked if she was alright and she snapped, "Like you care!" I ignored that and offered my hand to help her up but she knocked it away and demanded to know why I was "following" her. I told her I wasn't, she must be imagining it, and went to pick up some of her stuff and she snapped, "Don't touch my things!" I started to lose my patience then. I told her I was only trying to help and she said, scrabbling about in the snow trying to pick up her books, "I don't need any help from *you*." I said, sarcastically, "Yeah, you look on top of the situation," and offered my hand again and she said, wait for it, "I'm not touching your hand, I know where it's been!" *What?!* That *really* pissed me off. I told her, "I'm not bloody contagious, you know!" She said, "Just leave me alone, Ron!" I said, "Fine, if that's what you want, see if I care! At least I'm not the one sitting on my arse in the snow like a fucking idiot!" I started walking away then and she shouted after me, "And stop following me!" She always has to have the last word. I can't *believe* she said that. I'm still angry about it now. Fuck her. It's pathetic. She should just get over it. She should move on. *I* have. Stupid cow.

Dec 19th

Last day of term, thank Christ. I can't wait to get out of here. Every day this week somehow manages to be worse than the day before. I really can't decide which of them pisses me off the most. The other day it was definitely Hermione, yesterday it was Lavender, and *today*, well, I'm almost spoilt for choice...

So yesterday Lavender comes up to me after breakfast and announces it's our one month anniversary. Funnily enough, I hadn't remembered. A whole month, woo-hoo! How come it feels like *longer*? Like a five year stretch in Azkaban. Anyway, she's decided this momentous event needs some sort of celebration, which turns out to be an evening of snogging in an empty classroom exactly like all the other evenings this week. So she comes up to my room beforehand and she's dolled herself up for the occasion, and

we're just about to leave when she says, "Is that what you're going to wear?" I say, "Yeah, what's wrong with it?" She says, "It's *red*." "So?" "It clashes really badly with your hair." That makes me laugh. "Everything clashes with my bloody hair! What am I supposed to do, only wear black all the time?" She frowns. "You could have made a bit of an effort. Don't you have *anything* smart to wear?" I go red and start to feel annoyed. Why can't she just leave it? I say, a bit stroppily, "Actually, no. Everything I own is shit or second-hand or broken." She says, "I was only asking. You must have a shirt or something!" I say, "I just told you no, didn't I?" She says, "I think you're just naturally scruffy." I say, "Yeah, that's true as well, but you try not looking scruffy when you're wearing a t-shirt that used to belong to three of your brothers." She looks upset. I have upset her. She says, in a fake baby voice, "Sowwy, Won-Won." I say, grudgingly, "Yeah, whatever." She says, still in the fake baby voice, "Can you forgive your Lav-Lav?" I think, I can forgive you for calling me scruffy, 'cos I am, but not for talking in that stupid voice. Or calling me *Won-Won*.

Oh God, and she'd put this sparkly stuff on her face for some reason - *why* would you do that? So of course I ended up with it all over my face as well and I still keep finding bits of it on my clothes and in my hair and in my mouth, which is particularly horrible. I feel like a Christmas tree. Seamus thinks it's hilarious. At breakfast this morning he says, really loudly so everyone can hear, "Hey, Weasley, did you know you've got glitter on you?" and everyone on the table turns and laughs. Lavender giggles really loudly so it's patently obvious where the glitter comes from and I go absolutely freaking maroon and try and sink as low as possible in my chair. So everyone's laughing at me and in the middle of this I see *her* looking at me and she gives me this pitying look and shakes her head as if to say, "You really are a sad case, aren't you?"

And *then*, just to top the year off nicely, this afternoon in Transfiguration we were supposed to be changing the colour of our eyebrows - like that might ever be useful! Anyway, I must have done something wrong because I somehow managed to give myself a ridiculous moustache by mistake, and I saw her looking at me again and she *laughed*. I got her back, though. I did a very funny impression of her that made *everyone* laugh - you know, jumping up and down in her seat, hand in the air: "Ooh, sir, sir, I know the answer, ask me, ask me! Sir, sir, I know *everything*!" Lavender and Parvati nearly wet themselves laughing at that and she just burst into tears and rushed out of the room. Well, alright, maybe I did feel a bit guilty for about three seconds, but if she can't take it, she shouldn't dish it out, should she? I'm sick to the back teeth of both of them, to be honest. At least this time tomorrow I'll be out of here and I won't have to see either of them for two

whole weeks. Just tonight to get through first. *She's* going to her *party* and I'll probably end up spending yet another fun-filled evening in a freezing cold classroom with Lavender. I wonder if I could pretend I've got a stomach ache again. Sod it, I'm going down to dinner. Then if I really can't bear the idea of spending the evening with Lavender, I can blame it on Dobby's cooking! Excellent, that's a plan!

Unbefuckinglievable! Do you know who Hermione's going to Slughorn's party with now? You will never guess in a million years. Cormac McLaggen! I am stunned. I am appalled. I am still stunned. This is perfect. I honestly don't think she could have chosen anyone who would have pissed me off more. Well, maybe Malfoy. No, I don't think she could have chosen anyone worse than McLaggen if she'd done it on purpose. I really don't get it. At least Krum was famous, McLaggen's just a troll. Yeah, but he's a troll who gets to take Hermione to the Christmas party, so he must have something going for him. I wonder why she didn't ask Krum, though? I suppose it's the middle of the Quidditch season, he probably couldn't get away. And why would he want to come to a party at a school, anyway? He must get invited to loads of really cool parties. Maybe she dumped him. *Hah!* I hope so. I hope he was gutted. I hope he *cried*. Mind you, it didn't take her long to find someone else, did it? You'd think she'd at least have gone for someone smart, though. Alright, not me, but not a couple of thick-heads like those two, either. Christ, that really does wonders for your self-esteem, that does. She picked someone even stupider and uglier than me, and he's *still* more of a catch than I am! I never really stood a chance, did I? I suppose I should be grateful anyone wants to kiss me at all. Lavender is obviously my level. Hermione is way above my level and the sooner I stop thinking anything is going to happen the better. I did think, when she asked me to Slughorn's party with her... but then she obviously just meant as friends, or she wouldn't have been off snogging Krum, would she? I did think though, at the time, it felt like she was asking me, you know, *out*...

Anyway, it doesn't even matter anymore because she obviously hates me now. Why else say it right in front of me? She obviously just wanted to rub it in. We'd just finished dinner and I was, you know, with Lavender, and she came over to talk to Parvati and Parvati asked her who she was taking to the party and she said McLaggen! I couldn't believe it! I wanted to shout, "I'm right here! Could you not have waited to have this conversation until I'd at least left the bloody room, woman!" I mean, she asked me first, and she shouldn't have said about going with him in front of me. Alright, I was with Lavender, but anyone can see that's not going anywhere. It's obvious, isn't it? And Parvati said, "First Krum, now McLaggen, you really like your Quidditch players, don't you?" and *she* said, "I like REALLY GOOD

Quidditch players!" Thanks a bunch, Hermione. And the thing is, I think I'd actually let McLaggen be bloody Keeper if I could go to Slughorn's party with her instead. It's not like I'm a *really* good player, according to her, and anyway I only took it up in the first place because I had some stupid idea it'd impress her. Well, that obviously worked a treat, didn't it? She's going to the party with him tonight, and of course I'm not invited because I'm backwards boy. I'll probably get stuck with Lavender again. Oh joy, another evening snogging Lavender and thinking about Hermione. At some point I'm going to say her name out loud and Lavender will probably have me killed. As long as she doesn't then rush off and tell Hermione, I actually don't think I care. Hmm, let's think, another evening with Lavender vs. death by thousands of pecking canaries? I'd take the canaries any day. Ha! I'd rather eat Flobberworms. I'd rather play that nightmare first Quidditch match again. I'd rather go into the Forbidden Forest and be eaten by spiders! I'd rather snog *Snape*...

Oh God, they'll be at the party now. I think I'll just stay here and keep the curtains drawn and hopefully nobody will find me 'til it's over. I hope he makes some sleazy move and she slaps him and comes back here and then I can comfort her - yeah, with the usual Weasley wit and charm, I'm sure! Probably end up having another row. Then she'd slap *me* - well, she would if she knew half the things I thought about her in my head. The other day I dozed off in the common room and when I woke up I had this stupid grin on my face because I'd been dreaming about her - let's just say we were in the back seat of my dad's old Ford Anglia - and bloody bloody Lavender was there, three feet away, and she smiled right back at me. As though I was smiling at her! Lavender, my dear, let me assure you that at no point am I going to be having those sort of dreams about you. Which is sort of ridiculous, isn't it? I *am* supposed to be going out with Lavender after all. I am actually sort of getting some action with her. She let me get my hand in her bra last week. And you know, at the time... well, I'm human, aren't I? But ARGH! It's not her I spend all my time thinking about so what the fuck am I doing with her in the first place? Maybe I'll wait and see how this thing with McLaggen works out. Maybe if it all goes pear-shaped I can step in, chuck Lavender, and... and *what*, exactly? "Hello, Hermione, I heard you split up with McLaggen and I was wondering if you might go out with me instead?" "Oh, Ron, I have been waiting for you to ask me for years, you spanner! Shut up and kiss me!" Yeah, like that'd happen. She'd probably knee me in the balls. I'd knee myself in the balls if it wasn't anatomically impossible. (Ooh, get you, Weasley, with your big long words. You've been spending way too much time in the library!)

Christ, I've really made a mess of everything. As usual. And tomorrow we all go home for Christmas so I can't see when I'm even going to get the chance to talk to her. This is gonna be the worst Christmas ever. I should dump Lavender tomorrow. At least then I won't have to face her for two weeks, and maybe by the time we get back she'll have forgotten all about it. God, I'm such a coward! Another reason you don't deserve her, you muppet. I should have asked her. I should have plucked up the courage and done it. It's six sodding words, how hard would it have been? "Will you go out with me?" Easy enough! I should have done *something*. What the hell was I waiting for? I mean, she *did* ask me to the party, even if it was out of sympathy. Why couldn't I have just kept my big mouth shut about the Krum business? And why the *fuck* did I go and get off with Lavender? If I'd just apologised... At least she might still be talking to me. At least I might still have got to go to the party with her, even if it was just as friends. At least I might have had a chance. And maybe then I wouldn't be sitting up here on my own like an idiot, while she's downstairs at the party having a great time and probably snogging the face off McLaggen. He'd better not try anything. I'll fucking kill him if he touches her. I'll break both his hands so he'll never play Quidditch again. Yeah, because that'd impress her, I don't think. He's probably kissing her right now. He's probably got his hands somewhere he shouldn't. Oh *God!* That's supposed to be me down there tonight, she asked me first! *First!* It was supposed to be me and it was supposed to be her. Not Lavender. Not Krum. Definitely not sodding McLaggen. Fuck's sake. Who cares about Krum and McLaggen anyway? Who are they? Where have they been for the last five and a half years? I've been right here, Hermione! I've been standing right here all along, if you'd just look up and notice me. It's me who loves you, not them. JUST LOOK UP!

JANUARY

Jan 4th

Alright, I'm back. I forgot to take my diary home for Christmas because, obviously, I'm a retard. As predicted, Fred and George spent the whole time mercilessly taking the piss out of me. I didn't mind too much, though - I'd rather get teased for *having* a girlfriend than for *not* having one. I even started thinking - having not seen her for a whole week - well, maybe Lavender's not *that* bad, maybe I should be happy I've got a girlfriend at all and stop driving myself nuts over something I can't have. And I'd sort of decided, Ok, that's what I'll do, that's the sensible thing. I mean, Lavender's pretty, she likes snogging, she actually seems to like *me*... I should just put up and shut up, shouldn't I? I was actually quite pleased with myself because I'd finally made a grown-up decision, woo! But that was yesterday. That was me actually able to make a proper decision because neither of them were there to confuse me again. Easy enough to say that *yesterday*. Easy enough to say when I hadn't seen *her* for a fortnight either. She didn't even send me a Christmas card. Mind you, I didn't send her one either. I did think about writing to her, though. I even started a couple of letters, but I knew I'd only screw it up. Words are not exactly my strong point. Not sure what *is* my strong point. I asked Harry and he looked embarrassed and took far too long to come up with: "You're funny". Yeah. Cheers. That's definitely a talent I can harness in my future career. Girls don't want funny, everyone knows that. They want the smart, cool, good-looking boys. Not the stupid lanky ginger ones! Oh, I asked Harry about Slughorn's party as well, and he said he didn't think it went very well, with Hermione and McLaggen. So that cheered me up for about a nanosecond.

Oh my God! You will not believe what Lavender got me for Christmas! (Oh, obviously, I didn't dump her yet. I am proud of being a coward!). Yeah, so she got me this truly hideous cheap gold necklace with - urgh! - "*My Sweetheart*" on it. I honestly thought I was going to puke. I thought Harry might die laughing. I've made him swear never to mention it to anyone. Especially Fred and George. Especially her. Can you imagine what she would think? I didn't get Lavender anything for Christmas, because I was sort of hoping she might dump me over it. That's how cheap I am. At least she actually bought me something, even if it did SUCK. Anyway, I'd already spent all my money on Hermione's present. That's pretty classy as well, isn't it? I bought *Hermione* a present, but I didn't get Lavender one. King of romance, me!

So, anyway, I must have been in the bloody bookshop for hours trying to find the perfect book which would somehow sum up everything I wanted to say to her. In the end I got her this one because I thought I recognised the name of the Muggle writer. See how it helps to pay attention! I had a quick look through and it didn't really seem like her sort of thing, to be honest. More like something my mum would read, you know, bird in a bonnet fancies bloke in tights but - oh no! - he's engaged to someone else, blah blah. Anyway, the shop was closing so I didn't really have much choice. Then I sat there staring at it for ages trying to think what to write in it. Eventually I wrote "Dear Hermione, I hope this will "persuade" you to talk to me again! Happy Christmas, love Ron" (Because the book's called "Persuasion", you see? Yeah, it's not one of my best efforts.) I thought it still needed something else though, so I added "PS: I'm really sorry about everything." Then I lost my head a bit and wrote a load of other stuff I really shouldn't have done, instantly regretted it, freaked out, threw the book across the room, and some of the pages tore in half. Brilliant. Anyway, it doesn't really matter because obviously, there's no way I'm ever going to give it to her. It's been six weeks. She'll probably never talk to me again. I saw her today, and she completely ignored me. She said hello to Harry and Ginny, but she didn't even look at me. And even worse, while I was standing there feeling like pond scum, who should come screeching over but Lavender. You can imagine how happy I was to see her, especially in front of Hermione. She came up and threw her squid arms around me and gave me a big wet kiss which I just about managed to wriggle out of, but it was too late by then, Hermione had gone.

I get another chance to make myself look a prat in front of her as well, because they're starting doing Apparition lessons in February. Knowing me I'll just manage to Apparate my foot or something. Wish I could Apparate every time I see Lavender. She's doing my head in already. I *must* dump her before my birthday. No way am I getting another one of those rubbish necklaces from her. She asked me today why I'm not wearing it! Yeah, Lavender, I really want to have the piss taken out of me by the entire school! Can you imagine what that little shit Malfoy would say? Anyway, that's March, so that's ages away. There's no way I'll still be going out with Lavender by then. Two weeks, max.

Jan 5th

Went for a long walk around the Quidditch pitch with Lavender this afternoon. It was a nice day but to be honest I'd rather have been almost anywhere else than there, with her. We had a really boring conversation about what we'd like to do when we leave school. She doesn't know what

she wants to do, probably something in an office. I told her about wanting to be an Auror and she said, "Don't you need really good grades for that?" Yeah, cheers, Lavender. Like I need reminding. I know I'm not exactly bright, or I wouldn't be *going out with you*, would I? Anyway, that really pissed me off, so I lied and said I had to come back and finish an essay for Snape. She said didn't you say you'd not been given any homework yet? Damn her, does she listen to everything I say? So I had to stay out there for another half an hour, bored out of my skull. I need some new excuses. "Sorry, Lavender, I can't see you tonight, my owl's got a cold and I've got to stay in and look after him." "I'm taking Remedial Potions and the only time Slughorn can do the lessons is in the evenings." "I've gone temporarily deaf and can't hear anything you say." "I've got a highly infectious disease that can only be caught by snogging." "Basically, you just bore me stupid. Sorry!" I keep having these little practice conversations in my head where I tell her she's dumped and she miraculously takes it really well. Because that's obviously going to happen!

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "That's weird, I've been thinking the same thing. Would you be really upset if I went out with Malfoy instead?"

ME: "Yeah, but I'd get over it."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Oh my God, I am totally devastated and am going to go and throw myself off the astronomy tower!"

HERMIONE (at Lavender's funeral): "Poor Ron, you must be really upset, is there any way I can comfort you in your hour of need?"

ME (wiping away a tear): "I'm sure I can think of something..."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Oh okay. By the way, Hermione told me she is secretly in love with you."

ME: "Cool!"

Jan 6th

Quidditch practice this morning. Lavender came up to me beforehand and asked me if I was wearing her necklace for luck. I had to think fast and say I'd been too worried it might get broken or lost. Think I got away with it. If you ever catch me actually wearing it, just kill me. I don't think I could stand the embarrassment. I honestly think I'd rather tell her I want to split up with her than be caught dead wearing that thing. *My Sweetheart.* Excuse me while I shove my fingers down my throat.

Jan 7th

Very nearly dumped Lavender today but chickened out at the last minute. I got as far as saying, "Lavender, I think -" in my best serious voice but she just carried on talking as though I hadn't said anything. I just thought the rest of the sentence in my head: "Lavender, I think we should split up because you're driving me MENTAL!"

Jan 8th

Seems it's not just me who finds Lavender insanely annoying. I was talking to Ginny earlier - she's given up nagging me about Hermione every five minutes, thank God - and Lavender obviously assumed I was chatting up some other girl because she came rushing over shouting, "Ron! RON!", then when she got level stopped dead and said, sounding almost disappointed, "Oh. It's your sister." Ginny said, very coldly, "Do you mind? This is a private conversation." Lavender shot me an annoyed look, obviously expecting me to leap to her defence, but I didn't say anything. I was suddenly finding the pattern of the wallpaper really interesting. She put her arm round my waist and said, "Well, I'm sure anything you've got to say to Ron you can say in front of me. After all, I am his girlfriend!" Ginny rolled her eyes and muttered, "And don't you let us forget it!" There was a dead silence, during which I thought, great, thanks, Ginny, I bet Lavender makes me pay for that one later. Lavender opened her mouth to say something back, but then obviously changed her mind and decided to just pretend she hadn't heard. She beamed at Ginny like she was her best friend and said, "Well, it's been *lovely* to chat with you, Ginny" - Ginny looked disgusted - "But I really must go, I promised I'd speak to Parvati about something. See you later, Ron!" and she leant up and kissed me on the cheek and gave Ginny a little wave. Ginny didn't even wait until she was out of earshot before bursting out "HA!" really loudly. I was determined not to let her start on me about Hermione again, so I said quickly, "Just leave it, will you?" She said, "What? I'm saying nothing." I said, "Fine. Say nothing then." She said, "Except, you know, Lavender? *Really?*" It was on the tip of my tongue to say "Well, no, not really. Not remotely. I don't know

what I'm doing. Help me!" but instead I just changed the subject back to Fleur, who we'd been talking about before Lavender interrupted, and who'd just written Ginny a five page long letter about her responsibilities as a bridesmaid. So I had to listen to half an hour of her complaining that "She wants me to wear *apricot!*", but at least it was better than half an hour of her complaining about *me*, for a change.

Jan 9th

Just come back from another long walk round the Quidditch pitch with Lavender. I'm afraid she was talking but I'd stopped listening, I was just saying "Really?" and "Mm" in all the right places. Then she says, "You haven't even noticed my hair, have you?" And I say, convincingly, "Oh yeah, it looks really nice." She says, "What have I done to it then?" And I honestly cannot be arsed with this anymore, so I just shrug and tell her I've no idea, it looks exactly the same as it did yesterday to me. She goes "Tch!" and then after about ten seconds she says, "Seamus noticed my hair." I say, "I bet he didn't", and she says, "You're being really nasty to me lately, what's your problem anyway?" I am a bit stunned at this but it is on the tip of my tongue to say, "You're my problem, Lavender, is that not really fucking obvious?" I probably should have said it, actually. At least all this might be over by now. But as we all know, I'm a complete coward, so instead I mutter something about being worried about Quidditch, and that seems to satisfy her for the time being. Sometimes - and this is quite bad - I kiss her just to shut her up for half an hour. At least then I can let my mind wander onto, um, *other things*. That's pretty sad, isn't it? Sometimes I really surpass myself.

Jan 10th

Dumped Lavender today! Yeah, right. In my *head*.

Jan 11th

Woke up this morning and Crookshanks was sitting on my chest about five inches away from my face, staring at me. Nearly gave me a heart attack! That's the third time this week. What does he *want*? Maybe I could use him as an excuse to go and talk to her. Mind you, that would only work if I could actually get into her room and hand him over in person, of course. Otherwise it's just me going up to her in class and telling her that her cat keeps visiting me, which I'm sure I'll manage to make sound like an accusation, and she'll definitely take the wrong way. Everything I say lately seems to come out wrong. I was waiting for Lavender at the foot of the

stairs to the girls' dorm the other day and instead of Lavender, *she* came down the stairs, obviously freaked out a bit seeing me standing there, and tripped over her feet. And I said, wait for it, "Have a nice trip!" *Oh my God.* Even as I was saying it I knew it was a dumb thing to say. She just gave me this really withering look, like, "Oh, you are the most pathetic individual I have ever met".

She's not the only one who thinks that either. Lavender's pissed off with me, although sadly not enough to actually chuck me. Ginny thinks I'm an idiot. Even Harry finally cracked the other day when I was complaining to him about Hermione and snapped, "Well, maybe if you just said you were sorry..." I shut up after that and we haven't mentioned it since. He must be heartily sick of the both of us, I suppose. It can't be much fun having your two best friends spend all their time slagging each other off. He obviously thinks it's all my fault everything's turned to shit as well. Yeah, 'cos it couldn't be *her* that's done anything wrong, could it? Little Miss Perfect. It must be me as usual, right? I mean, I try to keep a dignified silence but it's hard to in the face of all the nasty little comments she makes about me, or more to the point, *at* me. Why can't she just leave it? She's officially not talking to me - if *I* say anything to *her* she just acts like she hasn't heard - but that doesn't seem to stop her having little digs at me all the time. Like today, I'm just walking along the corridor, I'm not even doing anything wrong, and she deliberately bangs into me as she walks past, calls me a long word and then adds, nastily, "I bet you don't even know what that means, do you?" I snap back, "No, since I haven't swallowed a dictionary. Here's something you might understand though -" and I raise my middle finger right in front of her face, then walk away as fast as I can. She shouts after me, "Oh, well done! I can really see where you get your reputation for devastating wit! It's *pathetic!*" I call back over my shoulder, "Still talking? Did you not notice I've got bored with the conversation and I'm not actually there any more?" She hasn't got anything to say to that one. *Ha!*

Jan 12th

Me and Lavender only manage one lap of the Quidditch pitch tonight. She goes to hold my hand but I'm too quick and shove my hands in my pockets instead. We do the usual walking in awkward silence. Then she says, "You never wear that necklace I got you." I tell her it broke. She says, *really* sarcastically, "And you couldn't fix it? What with being a wizard and all." I can't think of anything to say to that. She goes on, "You didn't even get me anything." I say I didn't have any money, which usually works as a guilt trip, but she just says, "You didn't write to me either, how much does that cost?" I did write to her at Christmas, and point this out. She says, "It was

three lines! And one of those was about peeling sprouts!" I make a stupid joke along the lines of well, there were a lot of sprouts. In hindsight, it's probably not the best thing to say. Lavender says, "Why am I even going out with you?" I shrug and say I don't know. She says, "Because when you're not being a total arsehole, I really like you." Which makes me feel guilty as fuck. She's right, of course, I am being a total arsehole to her most of the time. I feel so bad that for about ten seconds I think maybe I could be nicer to her, maybe I could be a proper boyfriend and not spend all my time thinking about Hermione, but then it's already too late, I'm thinking about Hermione.

Lavender looks like she might cry. I think, *what am I doing?* Lavender really likes me and I'm still spending all my time thinking about Hermione, who isn't even speaking to me, who will never speak to me again, who obviously hates me, who I never had a chance with anyway. So I kiss Lavender, and that's ok for a few minutes until I accidentally stand on her foot. She says they're the same shoes she was wearing when I spilt cleaning fluid all over her feet that time, and do I have something against them? I snap, "Christ, are you going on about your bloody shoes *again*?" She goes red. She says she meant it as a *joke*, actually, and anyway, at least her shoes don't look like her mum made them out of bits of other people's old shoes and aren't held together with *Spelotape*. I mutter, "Well, at least I have more topics of conversation than my *fucking shoes*..." Her voice gets a lot higher suddenly. She says she's sick of the sight of that horrible maroon jumper I always wear too. I think, oh, here we go, we're back on that one again, are we? Fantastic. She says it looks like it was knitted by a blind person. I tell her, "Fuck off, my mum knitted that!" She says that's nothing to be proud of. She says, how old am I, nearly seventeen? And I still wear clothes my mum knitted? She points out that all my jumpers are shapeless and have holes in them and the sleeves are too long and why the hell are they always maroon? Has my mum not noticed I've got red hair? She says them being knitted by a blind person is the only explanation. I want to tell her I don't like them either, but saying it out loud would be like admitting I care, so I don't, I just stand there and think of hilarious sarcastic replies in my head. Lavender hasn't finished with me yet. She says, why can't I buy a *new* jumper from a *shop* like *normal* people? And why can't I get some new trousers while I'm at it, because she's sick of the sight of the two inches of sock between the bottoms of my trousers and my shoes too. I open my mouth to tell her that that's fine, because I'm sick of the sight of *her*, but I never say it, because she carries on. She says, she's not being nasty, she's only saying it because she *cares* about me, but everyone else thinks it too, and is it too much to ask that I might make

a bit of an effort? Don't I care about her at all? *Her* feelings? And she bursts into tears. And I end up apologising to *her*.

Of course, then all the way back to my room I can't get what she's said out of my head. Does everyone else think it too? Does Hermione? She's never said anything, but what if it's true? Another reason I never stood a chance with her. Great. And the thing is, I don't really care, but I do care at the same time, do you know what I mean? I'm not that bothered about clothes, not really, but that still doesn't mean I want people taking the piss out of me for it. I definitely could do without a girlfriend who does it. I'm so annoyed I stop and spend ten minutes kicking the crap out of a wall. I'm sort of hoping that maybe if I actually destroy them my mum might have to buy me some new shoes, but the bloody things are practically held together by magic anyway - three stretching spells since last Summer - so they can't be killed. I feel really guilty about it instantly. Bill and Fleur's wedding is going to be really expensive plus mum and dad have just had to shell out twelve Galleons for my Apparition lessons, so there's no way on earth I'm getting some new shoes before at least September. And that's if I'm lucky. Of course then I'm even more pissed off, so I'm not exactly delighted when I get back to the common room and the first thing I see and hear is Hermione, who's sitting about ten feet away and laughing. She's probably not even laughing at me - in fact, she almost certainly isn't - but I'm so wound up I just snap, "What are you looking at?" and storm off upstairs where I throw my shoe at the wall so hard it bounces off and nearly hits Neville in the face. I think I'd better just go to bed before I piss anyone else off.

Jan 13th

Didn't sleep very well last night. It's nearly eight o'clock now and I'm lying here trying to decide whether I can face dragging myself out of bed and going down for breakfast. What's the point? It's just going to be another rubbish day. Jesus, this is shaping up to be possibly the worst year ever, and it's still only January! Sod it, I need toast.

Christ, I should have just stayed in bed. Seamus and Dean were laughing at something just as I arrived and Hermione piped up, "Careful! Ron will think you're laughing at him and bite your head off!" They both looked really embarrassed. I just gave her a hard stare and went and sat down at the end of the table on my own, like I was contagious or something. And then in Charms Flitwick asked me a question and before I could reply she said, really loudly so everyone could hear, "Oh, don't ask Ron, he doesn't know *anything!*" It would have been really cool if I could have actually

answered the question and proved her wrong, but I had to say, "Don't know, sir", and then she went, "HA!" in a told-you-so tone of voice. Course, then I sat there for the rest of the lesson thinking of all the sarcastic things I *should* have said and by the time the bell went I was really wound up. When I saw her leave I thought, "Right, I've had enough of this!" and I elbowed my way past the rest of the class and caught her up in the corridor and grabbed her arm, and she spun round and saw me and actually put her arms up to defend herself, like she thought I might hit her. For half a second she looked, well, sort of *frightened*, actually. All the horrible things I was going to say to her went right out of my head. I wanted to say, it's me. It's *me*. You *know* me, you know I'd never do anything to hurt you. I wanted to say lots of things. But I didn't. Because I'm a coward, but mostly because she stopped looking frightened and got that you-are-pathetic-and-I-despise-you look back on her face, the one she always seems to be wearing lately. She said, very coldly, "Could you let go of my arm, please?", so I did, and she said, "Is that it? Nothing else to say?" I just opened my mouth and closed it again like a particularly stupid goldfish. She went to turn away and muttered, "Idiot..." under her breath and I snapped then and said the first thing that came into my head, which was, um, "Why d'you have to be such a *bitch*?" She looked really shocked but didn't say anything, just turned around and ran off. She was ten minutes late to the next lesson and she'd obviously been crying because her eyes were all red. Harry asked me, "What have you said to her *now*?" and I said, "Nothing", but I felt guilty as hell about it for the rest of the day. The thing is though, she *had* been a bitch, so how come it's still always *my* fault? And why do I feel so *guilty* about it?

Jan 14th

Another brilliant evening with Lavender. We went for another long walk around the Quidditch pitch. Anything's better than sitting in the common room with Hermione making her sarcastic little comments every five minutes. We walked round a couple of times with absolutely nothing to say to each other as usual. She talked about some boring row she'd had with Parvati, I wasn't really listening. I talked about Quidditch, just for something to say, and I'm sure she wasn't really listening either. Then there was ten minutes of kissing goodnight and I thought, hurray, that's over, I can go to bed. And then she leant up and whispered, "*Do you love me?*" AARGH!!!! It's a good thing it was dark because I'm pretty sure I actually pulled a face. I definitely jumped back about three feet. And I said, brilliantly, "Uh... er... um... I... er..." I was desperately searching my brain for the right thing to say but all I could think was "Aargh!!! Aargh!!! Aargh!!" So I majorly panicked and went in for a snog instead, hoping to distract her, only I was

a bit fast and basically headbutted her in the eye. And then after I'd finished apologising she announced that she was going inside and on no account should I try to follow her - which, obviously, I had absolutely no intention of doing. Oh my God, I amaze myself with my brilliance sometimes. Why did she even have to ask? What did she want me to say? Did she want me to lie? For the love of Jesus, *never* ask that, don't you know anything? I suppose with any luck she might dump me now. Let's face it, accidentally headbutting her and giving her a black eye is a pretty good excuse!

Jan 15th

Ginny comes running up behind me in the corridor after breakfast today, whacks me really hard between the shoulderblades and hisses, "Why are you such an *arsehole*?" I call after her, "What have *I* done?" She stops and turns round and snaps, "You know perfectly well!" I say, "Yeah, well obviously I *don't*, or I wouldn't be *asking*, would I?" She says, accusingly, "Well, why's Hermione crying in the toilets, then?" For a brief moment I imagine her sobbing into my shoulder and me comforting her, and her being all grateful and apologetic - "I-I-I'm really s-s-sorry I g-g-got off with K-K-Krum. Can you ever f-f-forgive me?" - but that particular happy vision doesn't last long. Ginny says, "Well?" I say, "How the hell should I know?" She hesitates. "You haven't said anything?" "No!" "Well... you must have done *something*..." I snap then: "Fine! Believe what you want to, you always do anyway! I'm sick of you having a go at me! Did it ever occur to you that maybe some of this is *her* fault?" She screams with laughter at that: "No! How do you work that one out?" and I shout, "Oh, just fuck off, Ginny!" and storm off. I seem to be doing that a lot lately.

Oh, yeah, and Lavender completely blanked me all morning as well. So that was all three of them not speaking to me! I felt like a complete leper. It was quite funny, actually. I was almost starting to think of things I could do to get Harry not to speak to me either, then I'd have the set. Unfortunately she came over at lunchtime and said she'd forgiven me. Damn!

Jan 16th

I'm one of the last people at the dinner table tonight when Seamus spots me and moves up to sit next to me. We talk about how our respective Quidditch teams are doing at the moment (not bad, and embarrassingly lousy), then somehow the conversation gets round to Lavender. I probably shouldn't be talking about this stuff with Seamus of all people, but actually it's a relief to finally be able to talk to *someone* about it. I end up telling him

more than I should about how annoying she is and a *lot* more than I should about what a rubbish boyfriend I've turned out to be, just because it makes him laugh, and the stupider I make myself look the funnier he finds it. "You think *that's* funny? Wait 'til you hear the one about me headbutting her in the face!" God, I'm an idiot sometimes. Why can't I keep my mouth shut? Anyway, at one point Seamus says, "So have you been inside her Chamber of Secrets yet?" which makes me choke on my pudding and spray bits of rhubarb crumble down myself. When I've finally recovered and Seamus has thumped me on the back a few times, he says, "Well, *have* you?" I shake my head and croak, "No, I fucking haven't!" He says, "I notice you didn't have to ask what it means." I tell him it's fairly obvious. He says he made it up himself but I can use it if I want. I think, Christ, if I ever actually use that in front of a girl, I'll be asking for a smack in the mouth. Hermione would *definitely* not find it funny. Not that I'll get a chance to find out, since she's obviously never going to speak to me again.

Jan 17th

Lavender comes up to me tonight after dinner looking all miserable, which is fine, because the sight of her makes me feel much the same. She tries to put her arm round my waist and because there are still loads of people around and I'm such a grumpy git, I say, "Get off me!" and then when I see her face drop, "Sorry." She says, "You really know what to say to make a girl feel wanted, you know that?" I say, "Yeah, that's always been a talent of mine." She says, "I was being sarcastic". I say, "So was I." She says, "Do you think you could possibly manage to be serious for even five minutes?" I say, "Probably not. I thought that was why you liked me, 'cos I'm so hilarious." She says, even more sarcastically, "Yeah, that must be it." We stand there for a few minutes and eventually I crack and say, "Fancy a walk?", and she sighs loudly as though this is the worst offer she's had all day, which it probably *is*, and says, "Alright." And there you have it, the glue that joins us together, we don't have anything in common, we don't make each other laugh, we don't really even *like* each other, but we do quite like snogging and we're too pathetic to end it because we haven't got any better offers. Well, I haven't. I suppose if I'm going to be miserable anyway, I might as well at least get some action.

Jan 18th

Just had a huge row with Hermione. Typical. She hardly speaks to me for two months and when she does it's a bloody argument. Basically, I'm in the common room tonight and Crookshanks comes over and starts rubbing himself against my legs and just won't go away. Later on I see her looking

for him and when she sees where he is, she looks really pissed off and comes storming over demanding to know why I've "got" Crookshanks. I say, "I haven't got him, he just won't leave me alone" and she says, "Don't make me laugh, he's never liked you before!" I say, "Maybe he feels sorry for me now *you* don't like me anymore." She says, "And that's what you think, is it?" I say, "That's what I *know*." She says, "Fine! That's great. That's *brilliant*" and she goes to grab him only he jumps up in my lap and sits there purring really loudly. So of course there's no way she can pick him up without touching me *there* as well. She obviously realises this too because she goes absolutely beetroot and stares at the floor.

Then there's a really long silence where you can just hear bloody Crookshanks bloody purring, and then she says, "It won't work, you know!" I say, "What won't?" and she says, "Trying to get Crookshanks on your side!" I tell her that's ridiculous. I say, "Is it my fault if he keeps coming and sleeping on my bed?" That shuts her up. She says, "He sleeps on your bed?" I tell her yeah, not all the time, but sometimes I wake up and he's come in during the night. She says, "Well, next time would you put him outside please." And I shrug and say, "Fine, whatever" and then she says, and she looks as though she might cry, "He's *my* cat. You don't get to have my cat as well as everything else!" She tries to grab him from my lap without touching me, only she must have picked him up the wrong way or dug her nails in him or something, because he takes a swipe at her and scratches her hand. And instead of smacking him, she suddenly smacks the side of *my* head and runs off to her room, crying! This all happens really fast. It doesn't hurt where she hit me, it's more like she brushed the side of my head, but I can still feel it where her hand touched me. Anyway, I know I have gone really red and my heart is thumping like mad in my chest and I realise people are staring at me so I come up here. Jesus. It's the longest conversation we've had in weeks. I feel a bit bad, but it's not my fault if her cat likes me. Next time I see him I'm kicking him straight out the door. It's not worth the hassle. It's definitely not worth getting smacked in the sodding head.

Jan 19th

Another awful evening with L. I've been a bit of a moody sod all day today after last night's run-in with Hermione, so I was really touchy. At one point she reached up and touched my hair and I'm afraid I said "Get off!" and pushed her hand away. She looked really upset and told me not to talk to her like that please, and that she'd been trying to get a spider out of my hair, at which point of course I went completely *nuts* trying to get it out. She was no use whatsoever, just stood there watching me flailing around like

an idiot. She said, "It's only a small one." I told her to shut up. She started crying. It was a total disaster. I said, "Oh, don't cry", but I obviously didn't sound very sympathetic, because she shouted, "I can't do anything right, can I?" I didn't know what to say to that ("No"?) so I just shrugged and she said, "Oh, forget it!", and started to walk back to the castle very fast. I was actually quite relieved. And then she turned around and yelled, "Who's even afraid of spiders anyway? How old are you, *five*?" So that was obviously a fun evening. We really must do it again sometime.

Jan 20th

Saw Lavender this morning and she acted like nothing had happened. I was sure she'd be sulking with me for at least a few days. Why is she even going out with me? We have the worst time together. Why does she put up with me? Why do I put up with her? Maybe I could slip her some sort of reverse love potion so she wakes up one day and decides she doesn't want to ruin my life after all. I should just tell her I don't want to go out with her anymore. I'm still having those little practice conversations in my head several times a day, but funny enough I never seem to come out of it very well:

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "I'll see you in hell first!" (Getting out her wand and cursing me into oblivion)

ME: "Lavender, I've been two-timing you with Eloise Midgen. You'll probably want to dump me. Obviously I'm devastated and will cry about it later alone in my room, but I'm sure it's for the best in the long run. I'll never forget you!"

HER: "Don't worry darling, I forgive you."

ME: "Bollocks."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Why?"

ME: "I'm just sick of the sight of you."

HER: (bursting into tears)

HERMIONE (passing): "God, Ron, you're so insensitive!"

ME: "Bollocks."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Why?"

ME: "Because I'd rather bleed out of my ears than spend another evening in your company."

HER: "You can't split up with me, I've stolen your diary and am holding it to ransom. If you dump me, the whole thing's going to be published in *The Quibbler*. *Unedited*."

LUNA (passing): "Yes, it's true. I've already read it and I'm sure it's going to be our best-selling issue ever!"

ME: "So, Lavender, more snogging?"

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Why?"

ME: "It's Quidditch. Harry says you're putting me off my game. He said if I didn't dump you I'd be off the team."

HARRY (passing): "That's not true, Ron. I am hurt and offended that you could use me in this way. In fact, I've just decided I'm never going to speak to you again either. Oh yeah, and I'm replacing you with Cormac McLaggen."

ME: "Bollocks."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Why?"

ME: "It's Professor McGonagall. She says you're putting me off my lessons. She said if I didn't dump you I'd fail all my exams."

McGONAGALL (passing): "That's not true, Mr. Weasley. I am shocked and disappointed that you could use me in this way. A million points from Gryffindor. Oh yes, and you're expelled."

ME: "Bollocks."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Why?"

ME: "It's Hermione. We've been having an affair. She said if I didn't dump you she wouldn't let me touch her special place."

HERMIONE (passing): "That's not true, Ron. I am disgusted and appalled that you could bandy about my special place in this way. In fact, I'm so upset I'm going to go and get off with Harry."

HARRY (passing): "Brilliant! Thanks, Ron!"

(Harry and Hermione snog.)

ME: "Bollocks."

ME: "Lavender, I think we should split up."

HER: "Why?"

ME: "I've just realised I'm gay."

HER: "Everyone! Ron's gay!"

HERMIONE (passing): "Oh no, I can't believe it! I DID really fancy you and want to shag you and have your babies but now you're gay nothing can ever happen between us! I am so devastated I am going to chuck myself in the lake!"

ME: "Bollocks."

ME: "Lavender, I don't want to go out with you anymore."

HER: "Why not?"

ME: "Because I'm secretly in love with Hermione."

HER: "Hermione! Ron is secretly in love with you!"

HERMIONE: "Sorry, Ron, I only like you as a friend. Anyway, I'm secretly in love with Malfoy, so it would never have worked out between us."

MALFOY (passing): "Brilliant! Thanks, Ron!"

(Malfoy and Hermione snog.)

LAVENDER: "HA HA HA HA!"

ME: (hanging myself in the toilets with my own shoelaces)

Jesus, why is it so hard? (Because you're a coward, Weasley!) I know what I *should* do. I should dump Lavender. I should apologise to Hermione. Maybe I could get them both in the same room and then I could get it all over with at the same time: "Lavender, you're dumped. Hermione, I'm sorry. Thank you and good night!"

Jan 21st

Hermione isn't talking to me at all now. I wondered how long she could keep this up, and the answer seems to be, for ever. Have you ever known someone to hold a grudge this long? It's been over two months already! Maybe if I just apologised to her. I'm sure she's not interested in anything I've got to say though. I'd probably get another smack in the head. What would I even say, anyway? I'm sorry I got off with Lavender. I *am* sorry about that. It's not exactly been the high point of my career so far. I'm sorry I was rude to you. She was just as bad to me, though. Worse, even. At least I never smacked her in the head. I'm sorry I'm such an idiot. I'm sorry I made you cry. I'm sorry for all the things I'm sure I've done to piss you off that I don't even know about. I'm *really* sorry you kissed Viktor Krum and broke my heart. Yeah, I'm never gonna say any of it, am I? It's always going to come back to that one. Why did Ginny even have to tell me? I was happy in my ignorance. Well, maybe not happy, exactly, but at least there was hope. Now it's like slow torture. At least she talked to me, at least she seemed to like me even if it was only as a friend. At least I did get to actually spend time with her. Now she won't even look at me. I should apologise. I should say *something*. If I went right up to her and said I'm sorry, she'd have to speak to me then, wouldn't she? It couldn't be any worse than this. Still haven't dumped Lavender. I seem to spend my whole life avoiding her *and* avoiding Hermione these days, which is nearly impossible as they're both in most of my lessons. I play a lot of Quidditch. At least neither of them are there then. Lavender did start coming down to watch me practice but then I told her she was distracting me - obviously I lied and made it sound like I would love to be distracted by Lavender but that I really had to concentrate on improving my skills or I'd be off the team. I may well have blamed Harry. Hey, I'm not proud. I just wanted to think about something else for a change. And it's not like I don't need the practice. I may not ever be a *really* good player but I'm determined I'm not

going to let the team down anymore. At least maybe something good will come out of this disaster.

Jan 22nd

I am officially depressed. I seem to spend all my time at the moment either staring at her, trying to catch her eye, or if she's not there, thinking about her. It can't be doing me any good, can it? All this bloody moping. I feel like I haven't laughed in weeks. How long is this going to go on for? I am so sick of it. I am so sick of myself too. Did I not used to be generally quite a cheerful bloke? I can hardly remember. It seems like years ago. Why can't we go back to how it was before? That was alright. It was better than this, that's for sure. This is like the longest History of Magic lesson ever, it feels like it's never going to end. At least in History of Magic you knew the bell would go eventually. C'mon, Hermione, ring the bell! Make the madness stop! Just talk to me, woman!

Jan 23rd

Ginny just had a go at me in the corridor. She basically demanded to know when I was going to apologise to Hermione. I said, "Apologise for what?" and she said, "Oh, get a grip! Just go and talk to her, will you?" I told her she just feels guilty because it's all her fault and she said, "How do you work that one out?" I said, "Well, if you hadn't told me about Viktor Krum in the first place I'd never have -" and then stopped, because I didn't like where this conversation was going. She said, "Oh my God! Did you actually go and get off with Lavender just to punish Hermione for something that happened two years ago? You're even more pathetic than I thought you were!" I said, "NO! Anyway, shut up. Anyway, what do you mean, two years ago?" "Sometimes," she said, "You can be really thick." And she shook her head in disgust at me and walked off. And meanwhile I was just standing there struggling with several chains of thought at once:

"Did I just get off with Lavender to punish Hermione?"

"Two years ago! Does that means she hasn't kissed him since?"

"No, of course I didn't, we'd just won the match and everyone was hugging each other, and I hugged Lavender, and the next thing you know..."

"Two years ago! Why the hell didn't Ginny just say that in the first place?"

"Then... maybe when she asked me to Slughorn's party, she did mean to ask me out, she did mean as more than friends?"

"Oh."

"Fuck."

Jan 24th

Not the best day ever. I've just been going over and over in my head what Ginny said last night, and I've come to the earth-shattering conclusion that I really messed up. What if she *did* mean to ask me out? What if she *did* mean as more than friends? Alright, it still seems nearly impossible to believe, but what if it's true? And if it *is* true - well, I went and got off with Lavender instead, didn't I? Brilliant! No wonder she hates me. No wonder she won't even look at me, let alone speak to me. I'd be surprised if she ever talks to me again. And even if I'm totally deluding myself and she never meant anything more than as friends, I still messed up, because I was horrible to her over something that happened two years ago and didn't even ask her about it first. Jesus. I'm such a fucking idiot. I've just got to fix it, that's all. Except she won't even look at me, so how am I ever going to get her to listen to anything I've got to say? Last time we spoke to each other she burst into tears and smacked me in the head. She never used to cry all the time. She's not that kind of girl. Or at least, she never used to be. Now it seems that every time I speak to her I somehow manage to make her cry, and it just makes me feel like the worst person in the world. If I could just get her on her own for five minutes, maybe hang behind after a lesson or something. Yeah, like she'll ever let that happen. She runs away every time she sees me. This is all my fault! I've got to make her listen to me, just for a minute. Just for long enough to say sorry. If I could just get her to even *look* at me, that would be a start.

Jan 25th

Hermione didn't speak to me today. Big surprise. I deliberately went and sat next to her at lunch and she managed about five seconds before she obviously couldn't stand to be near me anymore, and got up and left the hall. We hadn't even had the puddings yet.

Jan 26th

Hermione didn't speak to me today.

Jan 27th

Hermione didn't speak to me today. Funnily enough, Lavender wouldn't shut up.

Jan 28th

Hermione spoke to me today! No, she didn't, I'm just kidding.

Jan 29th

Hermione didn't speak to me today.

Jan 30th

Hermione spoke to me once today. She called me "pathetic". Ha! Do you think she's coming round???

Jan 31st

Hermione didn't speak to me at all today. I think I'd even be grateful for a "pathetic".

FEBRUARY

Feb 1st

How has this happened? How in the name of Merlin am I still going out with Lavender and it's now February? What am I *doing*? Would it be too cruel to just say, "Lavender, I don't want to go out with you anymore?" Surely it's worse to drag it out like this? How can she possibly still think I want to go out with her? I spend my entire waking life avoiding her, for Christ's sake! And thinking about someone else, but she doesn't know that. She's started majorly hinting that she's going to give me "something special" for my birthday. I keep seeing her and Parvati giggling together so I'm taking a wild guess it's not something you can wrap. You'd think I'd be all excited about the idea, but actually I'm so not interested it's not even funny. I mean, it's not like I haven't thought about it. Obviously! But every time I spend more than five minutes with her I want to shove sticks in my eyes, and funnily enough, that's not much of a turn-on. Plus, it would be a bit bad if I waited to see what her "present" is when I'm plotting to dump her. Even I'm not *that* much of an arsehole. Anyway, Hermione might find out. I wouldn't put it past Lavender and Parvati to talk about it in front of her. Then I'd have to kill them. And then kill everyone else in the world so no-one finds out about it. And then kill myself. What d'you reckon, bit drastic? Oh yeah, before you ask, Hermione didn't speak to me today.

Feb 2nd

Lavender was trying to get me to guess what my present was earlier and even though I think I have a pretty good idea, I was being deliberately stupid so I didn't have to flirt with her, which I always find really, really painful. So she says, "Go on, have a guess." Trying to look all coy. So I say, "*Is it a type of fruit?*" She says, "No! Guess again!" My guess is she's going to find this game tiring a lot quicker than I am. I say, "Has it got wheels?" She says "No", funnily enough. Is it made of cheese? "No!" I'm afraid to say I actually start to enjoy myself, even though I can tell she's getting pissed off. Is it a plant? Is it a liquid? Does it begin with the letter J? Is it yellow? Is it something you can throw? Has it got a tail? Is it edible? Is it round? Is it flat? Is it rectangular? Is it made of wool? Is it a monkey? "NO!" She practically shouts this one, but since she hasn't got a clue I'm doing it on purpose, she's got no reason to be annoyed with me. Yeah, yeah, I'm awful. But I'm funny awful! Oh, come on, give me a break, it's not exactly been a barrel of laughs round here lately.

Feb 3rd

The thing that really pisses me off is that because she knows me so well, she knows exactly what to do to annoy me the most. She knows I can't stand silences, she knows it makes me nervous, so her not talking to me is about the worst thing she could have done. If she'd just shouted at me, I could have handled that. But the *silence!*

Feb 4th

Apparition lesson with Hermione today. Looked up once, concentrating hard on trying to Apparate, and found her staring at me. I'm sure I went totally red, I certainly felt like my face was burning up anyway. I kept watching her after that, trying to catch her eye, but she never looked at me once. Needless to say, I didn't manage to Apparate! But I feel like maybe there's *hope* for the first time in ages.

Feb 5th

OH MY GOD! I just spoke to Hermione! Yesterday gave me the nerve to actually do it, and I knew she'd be in the library on her own, so I decided and then had to do it straight away before I could talk myself out of it. Almost ran along the corridors from the common room to the library just saying over and over in my head what I was going to say to her: "Hermione, will you please just talk to me, Hermione, will you please just talk to me, Hermione, will you please just talk to me, Hermione, will you please just talk to me..." Saw her in the corner of the library, thought I might throw up, went straight up to her and just managed to get out, "Hermione, will you—" before she jumped up, practically elbowed me out of the way, and rushed off. Jesus, my heart's going like a train. My fucking *hand* is shaking! Obviously totally misread the situation. Well done, Ron. You absolute *idiot*.

Feb 6th

I saw her first thing for Potions this morning and she went bright red when she saw me and hurried off to sit right over the other side of the classroom, probably before I could try and speak to her again. She needn't worry about that, I've learned my lesson. She doesn't want me to talk to her ever again, fine. I get the point, Hermione.

Feb 7th

Nothing.

Feb 8th

Nothing.

Feb 9th

Nothing.

Feb 10th

Weird moment today. I caught her eye by accident in class and we just looked at each other for about three very long seconds. Then she looked away. She looked unhappy. I felt like I had Flobberworms in my stomach.

Feb 11th

She didn't speak to me at all today. Didn't even look at me. I stared at the back of her head all the way through Potions again.

Feb 12th

Nothing.

Feb 13th

Had a bit of a tiff with Lavender tonight. We were in the common room doing our homework. At least then I don't have to talk to her. Jesus, that's a pretty sad admission, isn't it? It comes to something when you'd rather do Potions homework than talk to your girlfriend. I really am a catch! Anyway, so we're there doing our homework and the portrait hole opens and out of habit I look up to see who it is and it's Hermione. And without any warning, Lavender suddenly throws herself at me and kisses me and grabs my hand and puts it on her thigh, and I'm so surprised I push her away. Unfortunately, I can't help looking up to see where Hermione is and if she's noticed, and when I look back Lavender is understandably a bit pissed off. She says, "Do that again and I'll sneak into your room when you're asleep and put dead spiders in your mouth." I think she would as well. If I ever get round to dumping her I'll have to make sure I lock my door at night.

Feb 14th

Oh God, Valentine's Day today. Lavender's been banging on about it for days. I've been pretending not to get any of her *massive hints*. I can't think of anything worse than having to spend the whole sodding day with

Lavender. No way of getting out of it either. I can hardly chuck her on Valentine's Day. *Can I?*

Lavender got me a giant card with pink bunnies on it. Some of the things she wrote in it made me cringe so much I thought I might actually vomit. I've not been able to get away from her all day. She came running up to me squealing like a pig this morning and gave me a big wet kiss and then insisted I open the bloody thing in front of *everybody*. And then Seamus grabbed it out of my hands and started reading it out loud! And when I eventually managed to get it back, I saw Hermione looking at me and she *laughed*. Yeah, I'm glad my humiliation is so funny to you, love. So that really pissed me off. I said to her, "Oh, did *you* get any cards then?", guessing she didn't, and that shut her up. She looked like she was going to cry actually. I wished I'd never opened my stupid mouth.

Feb 15th

Don't even ask.

Feb 16th

She's definitely coming round, I spilt gravy all down my trousers at dinner and she laughed really hard. Glad I can still make her laugh, anyway. Even if it was just at the prospect of me being horribly maimed.

Feb 17th

Nothing.

Feb 18th

Nothing.

Feb 19th

Nothing.

Feb 20th

Great. We were supposed to be going into Hogsmeade on my birthday - it's a Saturday this year - but it's been cancelled. I was really looking forward to that as well. Especially the bit where we all went to the pub and I could buy my first legal drink! Me and Harry were going to try Firewhiskey. But now I haven't even got that to look forward to. Oh yeah - *nothing*.

Feb 21st

Nothing.

Feb 22nd

Nothing. Well, some boring minor argument with Lavender that I can't even be arsed to tell you about. Nothing that matters. Nothing about *her*.

Feb 23rd

Nothing.

Feb 24th

Nothing, times a million. Right, I'm just not going to write in this anymore until something good happens. It's too depressing.

Feb 25th

It's bloody March in four days! Would you believe I am still going out with Lavender? I have seriously gotta dump her before my birthday. I can't believe it's been over three months. I must be the worst boyfriend in the history of the world.

Feb 26th

I had the worst day. I seem to be actually getting stupider! Can you believe it? Hermione used to help me with my homework and now she doesn't so my marks are actually getting worse, something I wouldn't have thought possible. And Harry's got his Prince book, of course, so he's top of the class in Potions as well. Meanwhile, I'm the same old slightly-above-a-troll Ron Weasley as usual. It's my birthday on Saturday. I just can't wait. Everything's rubbish. I'm sick of putting on this stupid happy face all the time. SHE still won't speak to me. I've forgotten what it used to be like before, I can't even remember what her smile looks like. I don't know what to do. I think about her all the time. *All* the time. When I wake up, when I go to sleep, and every sodding second inbetween.

Feb 27th

Oh my God, Weasley, you muppet, sort yourself out! If I could only get up the nerve to dump Lavender, then I could apologise to Hermione and

maybe, if I'm really lucky, she'll start talking to me again. I don't suppose it'll be like it was before, but anything's got to be better than *this*.

Feb 28th

It's my birthday tomorrow. *Great.* (Did you notice I was being sarcastic there???)

MARCH

March 1st

Yay! It's my birthday! It's about seven o'clock in the morning. I woke up and my first thought was about her as usual. I lay here feeling like absolute shit for about ten minutes, then I decided: no, I am not going to let it all get to me today. I refuse to give in to it. You only come of age once, don't you? So I say, fuck it, fuck *her*, it's my birthday, I'm going to bloody well enjoy it! And it's Saturday, so I'm going back to bed!

March 12th

Jesus. Where do I start? It's been over a week since I last wrote anything in this. Sorry about that and all, but I've been a bit busy. The big news is that me and Hermione are talking again! Oh yeah, and I got poisoned and nearly died and spent nine days in the hospital wing. But sod that, *me and Hermione are talking again!!!* I'll try and write down as much of what's happened as I can, but I'm still a bit all over the place and to be honest, I can't actually remember great chunks of it, so you'll have to bear with me. It's the best excuse ever, though, isn't it? Even Snape couldn't argue with that one!

Okay. So, basically, a couple of hours after my last entry on the morning of my birthday, in which I stupidly announced how I was going to have a totally brilliant day, I was up here opening my presents with Harry, and somebody had given me a box of chocolate cauldrons. I ate about three of them, and then I don't remember anything after that. Harry told me afterwards I must have picked them up from off the floor because they'd been under his bed for a few months and he'd forgotten all about them. They were a present from a complete muppet of a girl called Romilda Vane, who I'll definitely never be able to look at again. Anyway, she fancied him and spiked them with one of Fred and George's love potions (don't worry, I made them feel guilty about it later, and I know Mum gave them a good bollocking!), and because I'd eaten them I thought I was in love with Romilda. If I could remember it, I'm sure I'd be really fucking embarrassed. I even punched Harry because he said something nasty about her! Believe me, I've said worse since.

Anyway, Harry dragged me to Slughorn to get an antidote and Slughorn accidentally gave me a drink of something that turned out to be poisoned. It's kind of weird talking about this, because even though I was there, I honestly don't remember a thing about it. Harry says he knew something

was wrong straight away and that he ran to get a bezoar from the Potions cupboard and shoved it in my mouth, but by that time I'd gone blue and collapsed. And the next thing I remember is hearing voices from a long way away and I could hear Fred and George for some reason and thought I must be dreaming, and then I heard Mum and Dad, and Harry and Ginny too. I couldn't hear what they were saying, I just recognised their voices. And then I heard Hermione's voice and I thought, she's finally come to talk to me, and I was trying to talk to her but she couldn't hear me, nobody could. I was shouting "Hermione! I'm here! I'm sorry about Lavender! Hermione!" And her voice was sort of fading in and out so I knew she was there but I just couldn't make her hear me.

And then, I actually did wake up, and I remember that my head was absolutely throbbing, like someone was whacking the inside of my skull with a Beater's bat, and that my mouth felt like it was full of cotton wool, and there was a horrible taste on my tongue that was like a mixture of the worst medicine you've ever tasted, and Acid Pops, and vomit, and that funny metallic taste you get when you accidentally bite your spoon. I remember that my eyelids felt really heavy, and that I couldn't lift my head, or move my legs, and that it took me a while to realise where I was. I could see I was in the hospital wing but I'd no idea what I was doing there or why, and trying to work that one out just made my head hurt even more, so I stopped trying. It was completely dark on the ward except for a small light on my bedside table, and everything was really quiet. And then I saw that she was there on the other side of me, and she'd fallen asleep in the chair with her head resting on the bed, and she was holding my hand. And I still wasn't sure if I was awake or dreaming until I realised I could actually feel her hand and that it was warm and small in mine. My stupid great clumsy Keeper's hand. I didn't want to wake her up, and anyway I was still feeling half dead, so I just lay there holding her hand, and that seemed alright to me. It felt nice.

I suppose after a while I must have coughed or something, because she woke up, and shouted, "You're awake!" and threw herself on top of me and hugged me really tightly, and cried. She looked terrible, even worse than I felt. She said she'd thought I might die and she was really sorry about the canaries. I said I was really sorry about *everything*. And then I said, "It was supposed to be you, Hermione". Which, obviously, I would never have said in a million years if I hadn't been completely out of my mind, but just then, I didn't care. I still don't. Because she smiled. Actually, she positively beamed. And she said, "Good." And then I suppose I must have fallen asleep again, because the next thing I remember it was getting light outside and she'd gone. I wasn't sure if I'd just dreamt the whole thing.

Lots of people came to see me the next day, and I was mostly pretty out of it, but I know she was there, she spoke to me, we had a couple of little three sentence conversations. She must have missed some of her lessons, 'cos she was there for hours. It's not like her to miss lessons for anything. I was glad she did, though. She stayed for the whole of that evening too, and it made me happy just to know she was there. She wouldn't leave until Madame Pomfrey made her go, it must have been well past midnight. And the day after that I felt a lot better and I could actually sit up and talk to her properly for the first time in, well, months. It was brilliant just to talk to her again. I can't talk to anybody the way I can to Hermione. Neither of us could stop talking, actually. We didn't really talk about, you know, *us*, but we talked about everything else we hadn't been able to talk about for the last few months. Harry mostly. She laughed for the first time in ages. She laughed at some stupid thing I'd said and I thought, God, I didn't think I'd ever see her smile again. And I realised what an utter twat I've been and I promised myself I would never be the one responsible for making her unhappy ever again. All I've got to do now is let Lavender down as gently as possible. *All*, he says! It's only taken me three months! But at least now I've got a reason. Apart from her just being annoying, anyway. She kept trying to visit me in the hospital and I'm slightly ashamed to say I mostly just pretended to be asleep, so she kept pestering Harry about me instead. I couldn't face her. What would I say? I didn't want her to ruin this amazing, fantastic dream I was having. I almost didn't want to get out of the hospital and get back to normal, in case it *did* all turn out to be a dream.

Oh! Quidditch! Because I was in the hospital, that loser McLaggen got my place on the team and somehow managed to do an even worse job than me! I shouldn't laugh about it, but fuck it, I will. Apparently he was a complete pain in the arse and kept bossing everyone around and acting like he was the Captain. He even managed to knock Harry out cold with a Bludger! Jesus, I laughed so hard when I heard about it I thought I might puke. Actually, it's pretty annoying I was stuck in there. The way I feel at the moment, I reckon I could have saved *everything*. I'm hoping the rest of the team will be so grateful I'm not McLaggen they'll welcome me back with open arms. Harry says there's no way he'd have him back on the team now. Especially after giving him a cracked skull. Even at my absolute worst at least I never knocked out the Captain! Brilliant!

Actually, everything's brilliant at the moment. Everyone seems happy. Everything seems funny. Spring's finally here. The sun's out. There's a lot to be said for nearly dying for making you appreciate everything. You could poison me again tomorrow and I think I'd die happy knowing she's talking to me again and that there's, you know, *hope* in that department. I keep

just grinning to my self like a lunatic: in lessons, in the corridors, at dinner, probably in my sleep. And at her too, because I'm so bloody grateful she's my friend again. And even better, she smiles back! So, all in all, best birthday ever, what do you reckon?

March 15th

Sorry I haven't written anything for a few days. (Again!) Nothing bad's happened or anything, me and Hermione have just been staying up late every night talking. There's a bit of a backlog of stuff to talk about! I haven't had time to even start my essay for Snape yet and it's due in on Monday morning, so I've got to do it tomorrow. Bit of a waste of a Sunday, but there's no way he's going to let me off. I'm sort of hoping she might help me with it, to be honest. Is that taking the piss a bit, do you think? Too soon?

March 16th

So, um, *today*... I don't really know how to start this one, to be honest. Let's just say that even by my usual standards of idioticness, today was definitely a new low. *Although* - oh, I don't know! You can judge for yourself. Basically, the three of us were in the common room this evening and I was having a total nightmare with my essay, thanks mainly to Fred and George's sodding so-called Spellchecker pen rewriting the whole thing in, I dunno, Russian or something. You've probably been reading this thinking, hey, Ron, you're not as dumb as you look, you know, 'cos your spelling is *great!* Nope, my spelling is awful, their Spellchecker pen is great. Well, it is usually. When it isn't broken. Anyway, she offered to correct my essay for me, and I was so pathetically grateful I said - I still can't believe this - I said, "*I love you, Hermione*" Aarghhh!!! I didn't mean to, and I didn't mean to say it like *that*, either. It was an accident. I just meant, you know, *thanks*, that's all. You know how you sometimes just say it offhand? It doesn't have to *mean* anything.

So anyway, I said it, and there was this dead silence and nobody said anything for about five seconds. Oh my God! I just wanted the ground to swallow me up! I think I covered well, though - I pretended I hadn't noticed and put my hands over my face and turned it into a big fake yawn. Actually I was just thinking "*Ah, crap!*" and hoping to Christ someone would change the subject, but then I sneaked a look at her through my hands and she was *smiling!* Actually smiling, like she was *happy* about it. Gotta admit, I'm smiling now myself thinking about it. For about ten seconds there I thought I'd totally messed everything up but as it turns out... Do you know what, for

once in my life I think I may have actually said the right thing. By mistake! Jesus, I should make a few more mistakes like that. Oh, and after I'd said it she said, "Don't let Lavender catch you saying that", and I said, "Maybe I will, then she'll dump me." Trying to let her know that I *want* Lavender to dump me. Yeah, really subtle, Ron. Damn, you're good. Oh, come on, give me a break, I was in shock, alright? So there you go, it's out there! She knows, and she can take that bit of information and do what she wants with it. I was a bit embarrassed at the time - alright, mortified - but actually I think it's okay. It's fine. I'm totally calm about it. I am not freaking out. Well maybe a bit. If it all goes pear-shaped tomorrow and it turns out she's actually horrified I'll let you know. Shortly before I chuck myself off the top of the Astronomy Tower... ha! You think I'm joking, don't you?

March 17th

Hermione kept smiling at me today. I have to remind myself I'm still technically going out with Lavender, because this is suddenly going a bit fast. Maybe we could go on another walk, now the weather's a bit better. And I mean a walk, not a *walk*. Although if it turned into a *walk*, I'd obviously not be devastated! Oh my God, I can't believe this might actually happen!!!!

Later: Got cornered by Lavender at dinner and couldn't get away all evening, and when I saw Hermione later she refused to smile at me at all. Obviously she's a bit pissed off with me. Fair enough, I suppose, considering. I was sort of hoping the Lavender situation would just go away, to be honest. I've been avoiding her as much as I can, but she just won't get the message. There's not been any snogging for ages anyway, so surely if I'm not even in the same room as her, ever again, she'll get the hint? I keep thinking I see her out of the corner of my eye and have to duck behind things. It's no way to live, I tell you. This is where it's a major disadvantage being tall and having red hair: I'm sure she can see me miles off. Come on, Lavender, just chuck me, get it over with!

March 18th

Lavender came up to me in the common room tonight when I was sitting with Hermione laughing about something, and asked if I wanted to go for a *walk*. I said I had too much homework to do. She said, "Yeah, you look really busy" and flounced off. Hermione gave me one of her looks. She said, "Why don't you just tell her if you don't want to go out with her anymore? Unless you *do* still want to go out with her, of course." I said, "Of course I don't still want to go out with her!" She said, "Well, why can't you

just tell her then?" I said, "Because it's not that easy." She said, "Obviously." She was snappy with me for the rest of the evening. This is ridiculous. I've got to tell Lavender. Hermione almost never mentions Lavender in front of me, so she must be really pissed off to bring it up. Apart from anything else, there's no way anything's going to happen with Hermione until the Lavender situation's sorted out. You'd think that would be incentive enough, wouldn't you? She's right, how hard can it be? All I've got to do is open my mouth and say those three little words every girl wants to hear: "Lavender, you're dumped!"

March 19th

So there I am, sitting in a corner of the common room on my own because I really *have* got homework to do, unlike yesterday, when it was a lie, when Lavender comes over and plonks herself down opposite me. Her, beaming at me: "Hi, Ron! Do you want to go for a walk?" Me: "Can't, got an essay to finish." Her, disbelievingly: "*Again?*" Me: "Yeah, I get a new one every day. You've not really understood the concept of homework, have you?" She frowns. "What's up with you, Mr. Grumpy?" I just give her a hard stare. She reaches across the table and tweaks my nose. "Mr Grumpy-nose!" Me: "Yeah, that's actually quite annoying..." Lavender obviously mistakes this for flirting because she just giggles and does it again - reaches over, tweaks my nose, and says in her stupid baby voice, "Mr Grumpy-nose!" Me, through gritted teeth, and really not wanting to lose it and yell at her, not here, not in front of everyone: "Seriously, Lavender, that's *really* annoying." She looks a bit unsure, like she still can't tell if I'm joking or not, and decides to play the sympathetic girlfriend instead: "Aww, bad day, Won-Won?"

Bad day! Bad year, more like. Me, trying to get her to shut up: "I've got to finish this, is all." Her: "Alright, I'll just sit here and read my magazine, then." "If I don't get it done tonight-" "You won't even know I'm here. I'll be as quiet as a mouse." She presses a finger to her lips and giggles. I put down my head and try and make sense of my notes. Lavender leaves it about eight seconds before making a squeaky little mouse noise and giggling. "Ee ee ee!" Me, wearily: "Lavender..." Her, blatantly not: "Sorry!" Me: "If you're gonna sit there anyway, could you at least try and help me make sense of my notes?" Lavender, sighing like she's doing me some massive favour: "Oh, alright!" She picks up the top sheet of parchment. "Your writing's terrible, no wonder it takes you so long to do your homework." Me: "Are you going to help or are you just going to criticise my handwriting?" Lavender, in a whiny voice: "I'm bored. Can't we go for a walk?" Me: "No. I've got to finish this." She sighs and picks up her

magazine and rifles through it as loudly and pointedly as possible. I just ignore her.

Two minutes later: "Have you ever eaten sooshee?" Me: "What?" Her: "Sooshee. It's Japanese food. Celebrities eat it." Me, enthusiastically: "Oh, yeah, there's a Japanese restaurant in the village!" Her, impressed: "Really?" Me, laughing: "No!" Her: "Well, there *might* be! Don't laugh at me!" Me: "Well, let me get on with my essay, then." She folds her arms and sulks, but that's ok, at least she's doing it quietly. Apart from the loud sighs in my direction every ten seconds. Another two minutes go by. Then:

"Are you nearly finished yet?" "No." "How long do you think you'll be?" "Ages." "What, one hour, two hours...?" "All night." "All night?" "Well, I will be if you don't stop distracting me. "God, you're so boring!" "I'm so *dead* if I don't finish this." "Why don't you just give it to *her* to do?" I look up. I don't need to ask who she means. "I'm sure she could finish it for you in ten minutes, then we could have the rest of the evening alone." I almost laugh out loud. Yeah, I can totally see me asking Hermione *that*. Me, firmly: "No." Her, pouting: "Why not? I thought she was supposed to be your *friend*." "That's not the point." "But-" "Just leave it." She goes back to her magazine, muttering, "You'd think she'd *want* to help, seeing as how you nearly *died* and all..." Me, under my breath: "I'm beginning to wish I *had*..." Her: "What?" Me, cheerily: "Oh, you know... all this homework!" She frowns. "Oh. Yeah." She sits there fidgeting for another ten minutes, then she jumps to her feet and announces that she's got better things to do than watch me do my homework, thanks very much. Me, not even bothering to look up: "See ya!" She flounces off and I manage a whole twenty minutes of study before I have to admit to myself that I'm never going to finish the bloody thing if I keep looking up to see what Hermione's up to every five minutes, so I come up here instead. No distractions. No *girls*.

March 20th

Just came up here to escape from Lavender. *Again*. I know I'm chicken, I just couldn't face a big row. What would I say to her? The only thing I want to say isn't what she wants to hear, I'm sure. It's not like it can possibly be a surprise. She's already started complaining that I spend too much time hanging around with Hermione: "She didn't even talk to you for months! *I'm* supposed to be your girlfriend!" I've just got to do it, that's all. It's only taken me three months, you'd think I've had managed it by now, wouldn't you? I keep working it up to it but it's like I've got a mental block or something. She just won't let go. You'd think she'd be pleased to get rid of me, seeing as how I was the worst boyfriend ever and spent most of the time we've

been going out trying to dump her and moping about over someone else. Not very bright, Lavender. Or maybe she knows exactly what's been going on and she's trying to punish me. I wouldn't blame her. This is ridiculous. I'm stuck up here for the rest of the night now. I can't go down to the common room because they're both there and if I go and talk to one of them, the other one gets all stroppy with me. It would be funny if it was actually, er, funny.

Hey, I've just realised Lavender never gave me my birthday present! I wonder what it was? Nah, I don't really. Alright, maybe I'm a bit curious. But not stupid enough to actually ask! I never got a present from Hermione either. At least, not a wrapped one. Her talking to me again was the best present ever. She always does well with my presents, actually. No books, anyway! Apart from that year she got me and Harry homework planners to help with our OWL revision. That was a shit present. Sorry, Hermione. But apart from those, she usually does well. There is *always* chocolate, for a start! She once sent me a giant box stuffed full of packets of Muggle biscuits in the summer holidays; it needed four owls to carry it. I still remember all the weird names: Jammy Dodgers, Jaffa Cakes, Bourbons, Pink Wafers, Wagon Wheels, Curly-Wurlys, Iced Gems, Hob Nobs, Penguins, Chocolate Fingers... It wasn't even my birthday! And I remember once complaining that I never had anything new, that everything I owned had always been worn first by someone else in my family, and it was my birthday about a month afterwards, and Hermione bought me this brand new *unworn* Muggle t-shirt, it was red and had a monkey on the front. I remember joking at the time that I'd never seen anything with the label still on it before, but that was just to cover up the fact that I'd got a bit emotional and didn't want to seem gay in front of her. Why are Muggle things so interesting? I must get it from my dad, I suppose, although collecting plugs is taking it a bit far if you ask me. I like some of their slang too, like muppet, that's a great word. Seamus says it all the time, so I'm guessing it must be an Irish thing. And Muggle *girls*... what is it about Muggle girls? It's their strangeness. Sometimes I have these conversations with Hermione where I've no idea what she's talking about and I have to keep interrupting to ask questions: "Who's..?" "What the hell is a...?" "You did *what*?" Actually, let's face it, it's not Muggles generally I find so fascinating, its just one in particular.

Funnily enough, it never once occurred to me that Muggles might find *me* weird. I stayed at Hermione's house once, in the summer holidays after third year, and it was the first time I'd ever been to a Muggle house, so everything was new and strange to me. On one of the days we got the bus into town, and oh my God, the Muggle girls! Hundreds of them, all wearing

these little skirts and little tops and giggling and shrieking all over the place. All those bare arms and legs and stomachs, Jesus. I didn't know where to look. Well, I *did*, obviously. Ahem. Bear in mind I come from the middle of nowhere in the country, I've got five brothers, and everyone else I knew before I came to Hogwarts was from a wizarding family. Muggles were the weird ones to us, you saw them in the village and you had to remember not to tell them you were a wizard, because they'd just think you were mental.

Looking back now I'm sure they must have thought we were a bunch of freaks, the red-haired kids with the odd clothes. Which, by the way, I never realised were odd 'til I came here and discovered that not only did the Muggle kids laugh at my clothes, but most of the kids from wizarding families did too. Of course, it probably didn't help that I drew extra attention to myself by being taller than all the other first years, and having red hair. Hanging around with the most famous boy in school can't have done me any favours either. "Which one's Harry Potter?" "The one with the dark hair and glasses." "Where?" "Standing next to the lanky ginger kid in the spacky clothes." I'm not kidding either, I heard them say it. I had to ask Harry what spacky meant. That was a fun conversation, as I'm sure you can imagine.

Anyway, the Muggle girls... So, you know, I was fourteen, I was probably (OK, definitely) a bit backward in that department, and they were just so different from the girls at school. They spoke differently, they dressed differently (Oh my God, did they dress differently!), everything about them was just, well, different. I made the mistake of grinning at a few of them, and they'd just glance at each other, look me up and down, and burst into giggles. I'm sure if you could translate those giggles they'd have been saying, "Oh my God, that weird ginger boy is smiling at us, as *if!*" I think that was probably the first time I realised I'd never stand a chance with those girls. Instant disappointment! It was like: Oh, look, *girls!* Hmm, that's interesting... (two seconds later) ... Oh, they think I'm a freak. *Excellent.* Even before I'd opened my mouth they already thought I was weird, imagine if I actually had the nerve to speak to them! What would I have said? Well, I wouldn't have told them I'm a wizard, for a start. Somehow I don't think that'd have gone down too well. And then there's the fact that I don't know how to use the money and I don't know how tellyvision works or what all that stuff is they sell in the shops, or anything. I was completely out of my depth. I still feel like that now when we go to London. Stupid kid from the sticks who doesn't know anything. It wasn't the greatest day all round really. I just wanted to go back to her house where it was just the two of us, because that was alright. She didn't make me feel stupid, or

weird, or any of that stuff. Not on purpose, anyway. Of course, later on I made *myself* feel like that when I was around her (still do, all the time), and maybe she might have thought it, but if she did she never said and she never laughed at me like those Muggle girls did.

That whole week staying at her house was kind of weird, to be honest. In a good way, though. I spent a lot of time in her bedroom. Not like *that*, Jesus! But I'd never been in her room before - at school boys aren't allowed in the girls' dorms - and it was like, "Oh! She's a *girl!*" It sounds pretty stupid, I know, and it wasn't like I hadn't realised she was a girl before, I wasn't *that* backward... it was just, I don't know, I never really thought of her as being like those other Muggle girls. And she isn't, not really, but she *is* at the same time, do you know what I mean? She had things in her room I might have expected if I'd given it any thought: books, stationery, those funny non-moving photographs of her family and of her when she was little, one of the three of us I didn't even remember being taken where my hair looked like it was on fire. But she had girl stuff in her room too, you know, lotions and hair grips and all that stuff Ginny has. I suppose it was a bit of a revelation. I distinctly remember spending a good twenty minutes one morning sitting on her bed watching her brush her hair, and it making me feel a bit funny, but not really knowing why. I *did* say I was a bit backwards in that department! I think I realised even then that I wasn't good enough for her, I just didn't know exactly why that bothered me yet.

God, how long did it take me to actually admit to myself that I fancied her? Months. Years! I couldn't tell you exactly when. At least the start of fifth year. But fourth year was definitely the start of me catching myself staring at her and thinking, oh God, that's not good. If you'd actually have asked me outright I'd have denied it 'til I was blue in the face. I do *not* fancy Hermione, no way, fuck off! I might even have believed it, too. Convinced myself I definitely didn't like her in that way. There wasn't a chance in hell, so what was the point? I mean, *come on!* Someone like *her* fancying someone like *you*? Don't make me laugh! Not in your wildest dreams, kid. Not in a million years. Not unless she had some sort of head injury, anyway.

Fifth year was me catching her staring back sometimes and thinking, *maybe...* no, never gonna happen. But *maybe...* I tell you what, here's my plan: I'll just carry on staring at her like a lemon and never say anything, ever. Which I've been doing ever since, to exactly no result. Well, at least until the last two weeks when I've said more to her than I've said in the last two years put together! Maybe actually saying it aloud was all I needed to do all along. Who knew? Maybe I am capable of saying the right thing

sometimes! Mind you, the first time I was practically unconscious and the second time was an accident, so I can hardly take credit. But she did smile. Both times. She definitely smiled. Oh God, maybe there actually *is* a chance in hell after all...

March 21st

Well, it looks like me and Hermione are back to normal! We had a row, the sort we used to have all the time where you're not sure what you're arguing about *while* you're actually arguing. I got an atrocious mark on one of my essays and I was complaining about it to her, and we somehow ended up having this *ridiculous* argument that went something like this:

HER: "Well, maybe if you just *concentrated* a bit more...."

ME: "Oh, thanks! What do you think I've been doing?"

HER: "There's no need to shout at me, I'm just saying you get easily distracted."

ME: "Whose fault is that?" (*Brilliant, Weasley, just brilliant*)

HER: "Oh, is it my fault that you don't pay attention in lessons now?"

ME: "That was supposed to be a compliment." (*This made more sense in my head, honest*)

HER: "How? How was that a compliment? That was the worst compliment I've ever received if it was!" (*Yeah, fair point*)

ME: "I just meant, you know, I've been distracted by, well, everything. You've been keeping me up late!" (*This was an attempt at a joke, would you believe*)

HER: "Well, if you don't like it, I'm sure I can arrange not to distract you anymore! Maybe *Lavender* can distract you instead!"

ME: "That's not fair. And don't bring Lavender into it."

HER: "I'm not the one who's going out with her. *You're* the one who brought Lavender into it." (*Oh, well played, Hermione!*)

ME: "I'm trying! It's not as easy as it looks!"

HER: "Oh, do whatever you want, Ron, why should I care anyway?"

ME: "Yeah, well, I don't care either, so..."

HER: "Fine!"

ME: "Fine!"

HER: "*Fine!*"

ME: "What are we arguing about again?"

HER: "I don't know. You started it."

ME: "Fine, blame me. It's always my fault anyway."

HER: "A minute ago you were saying it was all *my* fault."

ME: "That's not what I said at all!"

HER: "Oh, shut up, Ron."

I shut up. We sit there in silence for what seems like ages. Finally, I think, I'm not having this, I'm going to make her talk to me if it kills me. I go straight into Ron mode: make stupid jokes hoping she'll laugh and everything will be alright again, but she just sits there stony faced. We both keep having little digs at each other for the rest of the day. I still don't really know what we were arguing about. I do know one thing, though, first thing tomorrow I'm going to find her and say sorry. The last thing I want is for everything to all get out of hand like before.

March 22nd

I waited in the common room this morning for her to come down for breakfast and before I could even open my mouth, she said, "I'm sorry about yesterday." I said, "I was just about to say the same thing. Are we OK?" She smiled and said, "Of course." I chanced my arm and asked if I could give her a hug. She said, "I wouldn't if I were you, Lavender's just come in." Bloody Lavender. Why can't she just take the hint?

I really don't know how to be with her anymore. Are we just friends again? Are we more than that? And if we are, why the hell are we still arguing? Oh, I don't know, what did I *think* was going to happen? Did I really think I was going to come out of hospital and suddenly everything was going to be

different? Well, yeah. That's exactly what I did think. But it isn't. *Why* isn't it? Oh, I don't know. I don't know anything. Big surprise, Ron doesn't know anything! If there was some sort of medal for not having a clue about stuff, I'd definitely win.

March 29th

Haven't written in this for about a week. Nothing's happened. No, really, nothing's happened. Everything seems to have gone back to what it was like before. Which is great and everything, don't get me wrong, but I'm starting to wonder if I did actually dream that bit in hospital where she was holding my hand. Last week I was, say, 90 percent sure she liked me more than just as friends, and now it's down to about 55 percent. What if I'm wrong and it's all in my head? What if I really did dream what happened in the hospital? I was completely out of it, after all. You know I thought she'd missed all her lessons to sit by my bedside and that was, you know, *proof*, 'cos she never misses lessons for anything? Well, I realised that actually, it was a Sunday, so she didn't. So if I got that wrong, maybe I imagined the rest of it as well.

And even if I didn't imagine it, what if I do something stupid (unlike me, I know) and ruin it all? It would be just typical if I finally get her back as a friend and then mess everything up again. It's easier to just leave things as they are. It's definitely safer. Maybe she'll give me a sign. Maybe she's waiting for me to properly ask her out. Maybe she's waiting for me to *kiss* her! Oh my God, there's no way I'm ready for that one. It makes me feel sick just thinking about it. It makes me feel sick exactly the same way I do before Quidditch matches. Not that I don't want to, *Jesus!* I really, really want to, more than anything, but it's *her*. It's not that easy. All the things that could go wrong. Come on, what are the chances, knowing me, that I don't mess it up? I *always* mess it up. No, I'm just going to have to wait for a sign. An actual sign would be good: "Oi, Ron, ask me out!" That would help, definitely! Boys are always supposed to make the first move. How does *that* work? You can't rely on us, we've no clue what we're doing! What does she want? How am I supposed to know? Why does it have to be me who falls flat on my face? And anyway, technically I'm still going out with Lavender, so shouldn't I get rid of her before asking Hermione out or anything else?

Oh yeah, Lavender. I haven't dumped her yet. It's not like I'm really still going out with her either, though, we hardly spend any time together any more. There's not been any snogging for weeks. It would be like cheating on Hermione, I think. Which isridiculous, because *nothing's happened*.

Jesus Christ, listen to me! Torn between two women! Every boy's dream! Yeah, well, that's bollocks for a start. I'm only torn between them because I'm too pathetic to tell Lavender I want to split up with her. And before that because I was too pathetic to tell Hermione I liked her more than just as friends. But she knows *now*, so why has nothing happened? Well, obviously, Ron, because you still haven't sorted out the Lavender situation, you absolute muppet. Bloody Lavender! It's driving me nuts to think I might actually get somewhere with Hermione, and that maybe she might even want me to, but I can't, because, oh, I forgot to ditch Lavender.

She's like this huge weight around my neck, Lavender. Every time I see her I think, I'll tell her now, but it's never the right moment. She always seems to have people around her, or I do. If I'm strictly honest, I have mostly been going out of my way to avoid her as much as possible. I can just imagine her reaction when I finally tell her. She won't go quietly, I bet you. She'll probably hex me. And if I *don't* dump her, Hermione will probably hex me. Basically, I have no idea what I'm doing. Can we go back to first year please, when all I had to worry about was giant trolls and three-headed dogs?

March 30th

Even the bloody weather's mocking me. You know I said at the start of the month when I was all happy about not dying and stuff, that the sun had come out and it was Spring at last? Yeah, well, that lasted for about two days, and it's just been howling gales and rain and misery for the rest of March. Really great weather for Quidditch practice. I nearly got blown into a tree yesterday. We even had hail this morning, which is a bit scary when you're in a greenhouse, I can tell you. I kept hoping Herbology might be cancelled but Professor Sprout just shouted louder than usual over the noise. So my optimistic mood from a couple of weeks ago has just been crushed by a combination of crappy weather and my usual tedious agonising over L & H. Honestly, I'm boring myself. I have *got* to do something about this, it's nearly a quarter of the way through the year and I'm still having these same conversations with myself I was having in sodding December. It's nearly April, for God's sake! Sort yourself out, Weasley, you muppet!

March 31st

Right, I've just got to do it, that's all. When I was in the hospital I told myself I was going to sort this out and that was weeks ago. I've been trying to dump Lavender since before Christmas, for God's sake. I've been

wanting to kiss Hermione for, well, a long time. I can do it. I *can*. What was all that snogging with Lavender for if not practice?! So that's it, that's my new plan: chuck Lavender, kiss Hermione! Oh, but that sounds so easy, Ron! I can't understand why you haven't managed it before...

APRIL

Apr 1st

Day 1 of my fantastic new plan. April Fool's Day: very appropriate! No chances today, sadly. Harry was around all the time. Damn you, Harry! Maybe I need to *create* chances. If I can just arrange to bump into her in the corridors between classes or something. There's always so many people around though. What I need is Harry's map that tells you where everyone in the castle is at all times, so I could check to see when she's on her own and miraculously turn up: "Oh, hello, Hermione, what are you doing here?" Actually, that might be a bit creepy.

Apr 2nd

Day 2: We were in the common room this evening and she was correcting the spelling in my Charms essay. I chanced my arm and gave her the world's quickest hug. I am working my way up to kissing her. A hug is a half-arsed attempt. A hug is a failed kiss. A hug is me chickening out. Still, I reckon eventually I might actually be able to do it. Maybe when I'm *thirty*.

Apr 3rd

Day 3: She helped me pick up my stuff in the hall after one of the Slytherin lot broke my bag strap again. I gave her another of my patented Weasley two-second hugs. One... two... let go. I have to let go because somehow it always feels like she can read my mind when I'm hugging her. Any more than two seconds and she'll *know*. Any more than two seconds and I might as well just bloody kiss her. I think about kissing her all the time. I think about nothing else. Several times a day I'm standing there with her and there's a three second opportunity, but I just can't do it, I'm like rooted to the spot or something. We're standing there talking, or she is, and I'm pretending to listen but really I'm just staring at her mouth and the voice in my head is shouting "Come on, kiss her! What are you waiting for? What the hell's wrong with you? What are you just standing there for? Come on, you muppet!"

Just realised I was already sort of doing this last month as well. Trying to chuck Lavender, trying to make a move on Hermione. Or at least, thinking about doing it. Although then it wasn't a plan. This is a *plan*. Because that makes all the difference, obviously!

Apr 4th

Day 4: Jesus, I really, really want to kiss her. Sometimes she smiles at me and I have to physically restrain myself from going over and doing it. It doesn't help that there suddenly seems to be a lot more physical contact. Or am I imagining it? I mean, I wouldn't put it past me to be completely making it up, but I swear... It's like earlier, we were at lunch, and she climbed onto the bench to sit between me and Harry and grabbed my shoulder to steady herself. And then in Potions she sat next to me as usual, but much closer than necessary, and her leg was pressed right against mine so that I could feel it there all the way through the lesson and didn't get any work done at all. And tonight on the way into the hall for dinner, she came up behind me and grabbed my arm so she could say something, but she definitely kept her hand there longer than she needed to. Yeah, yeah, I know all these things might be accidental. But they might not be! Give me the benefit of the sodding doubt, will you?

Apr 5th

Day 5: Okay, so I'm imagining it.

Apr 6th

Day 6: Okay, I'm definitely not imagining it. At breakfast today, I did the sitting way too close thing and she didn't move her leg away at all! She could have done, there was plenty of room! I spent the rest of the morning all the way through double Potions just staring at her like an idiot and completely tongue-tied every time she spoke to me. This is *ridiculous*, why is it so hard? I never had this problem with Lavender. I used to snog her in front of the entire Gryffindor common room. So why the hell can't I get up the nerve to kiss Hermione in front of exactly no-one? Oh, for fuck's sake, I've just got to *do* it! It's not like she can't be expecting it, what with me being so subtle and all.

Apr 7th

Day 7: So tonight, everyone else has gone down to dinner, and I'm sitting on the end of my bed trying to put another stretching spell on my trainers, which are rubbing worse than ever lately. Dean is just leaving. He gets to the door and then sticks his head back round it and says, "You've got a visitor, Ron..." I look up and he's gone, but *she* is standing there instead. She says, "I was waiting for you to come downstairs but I got bored waiting. What are you doing?" I tell her, "Trying to stretch my trainers. They've already got three stretching spells on them, I'm not sure they can take anymore." She comes over and sits down on the bed next to me and takes

the shoe from my hand. I am suddenly very aware how quiet it is, and that we're alone in my room and everyone else will be at dinner for the next hour. My heart starts beating very fast and, it seems to me anyway, very very loudly. All I can hear apart from that is the ticking of a clock and the bed creaking - *the bed creaking!* - when one of us moves slightly. I could just lean across and kiss her. I could actually do it. There's literally nothing stopping me. Well, apart from the rising panic that's setting in. My legs have gone numb. My palms are sweaty. My mouth's dry. She's *right there*, you idiot. What are you waiting for? Oh, hell. *Hell*. I'm not ready for this. I'm so not ready for this it's not even funny. We could sit here for the entire dinner hour and I'd *still* not get up the nerve to do it. We could sit here 'til sodding *Christmas*.

Then she says, interrupting my chain of thought, "What's wrong with your other shoes?" I snap back into reality again. "I, er, threw them out of the window." This is, sadly, true. It was in February. I was having a bad month. She says, "Why, for heaven's sake?" "I was just sick of the sight of them, to be honest. They were all held together with Spelotape. I went to get them the next morning but it had snowed and I could only find one." She stares at me as if she's trying to work out if I'm joking or not, then the corners of her mouth start to twitch. She says, deadpan, "Maybe you should shrink your feet instead." I say, "Har har" and she laughs. She gets out her wand and tries a few spells but nothing seems to work. Eventually she just hands it back to me and says, "I think you're right, they're all stretched out. I'll go to the library tomorrow and see if I can find a spell. Come on, we'll be late for dinner!" She's already halfway across the room before I can protest. I say, in a pathetic attempt to stop her leaving, "You know, I'm not sure I'm actually hungry..." She bursts out laughing as though that's the funniest thing I've ever said, says, "You, not hungry? That'll be the day!" and is out of the door before I can say anything else. Like, "Actually, I'm really not. I had a Chocolate Frog half an hour ago. And we *did* have a big lunch..."

Apr 8th

Day 8: Sometimes I swear it's like I'm watching myself in slow motion and shouting "Nooooooooo!!!" Today was a classic. We're in the corridor, and she's leaning against the wall and I'm standing about three feet in front of her. I'm just staring at her mouth, I'm not even really listening to what she's saying anymore. And then, before I can even think about what I'm doing, or try and stop myself, I sort of lurch at her. And at the exact same moment, she suddenly spots Professor Vector walking past and runs over to talk to him. Meanwhile I lurch straight into the wall and smack myself in the

forehead. Really fucking hard. They both turn around to see what's happened. I say, stupidly, and rapidly going the colour of a tomato, "Tripped over my foot." Rubbing my head. Brilliant. *Fantastic!*

Ps: Just realised this was supposed to be a two part plan and I've skipped Stage One and gone straight onto Stage Two. Mind you, Stage Two *is* a lot more appealing!

Apr 9th

Day 9: I "happened" to bump into her between lessons this afternoon, and we were walking along a corridor on the third floor when I noticed one of the classrooms was empty and said, without thinking, "Quick, come in here!" She followed me in but she hovered in the doorway and looked a bit suspicious, as well she might. She said, "Why are we in here?" And for the life of me I could not think what to say. I just stood there and felt a bit sick and didn't say anything. She said, "I've got to get to my next lesson," and started to back out of the classroom. And I thought, *say something, you idiot. Say anything!* And I said, brilliantly, "Oh, I just needed to borrow the... er... the... um..." (desperately looking around the classroom for something I might have come in to borrow) "... this book." (Picking up entirely random book off the shelf and trying to look as though this was definitely the thing I wanted all along) She said, "Advanced Arithmancy? You're not even doing Arithmancy! Why do you need a book about it?" I said, "I thought I might do extra lessons." Oh, great, yeah, *really* convincing! She looked like she might laugh but then obviously thought better of it and just said, "Good idea. I've got to get to my class now". Jesus, that was just pathetic! Why can't I do it? *Advanced Arithmancy!* Christ, Weasley, you really are six foot of ginger idiot!

Apr 10th

Day 10: Well, today was an absolute *disaster*. I was sitting next to her in the corner of the library and noticed there was no-one around, so I started leaning towards her really slowly, so slowly I could deny it if she noticed. She was reading her book, so she wasn't looking at me, and I thought if I could get close enough, she'd suddenly realise and turn her face towards me and by then I'd have the momentum up and wouldn't be able to stop myself and she wouldn't be able to stop me either. Obviously, I thought about it way too much. I didn't think I was even being that obvious with the slow leaning thing but then she suddenly said, "How's Lavender?" I jerked my head back and tried to look like I wasn't up to anything suspicious, but I know I went bright red and of course I said something stupid like, "*Huh?*"

She still wasn't looking at me, she was just reading her book, so I suppose at least I should be grateful that she couldn't see how guilty my face must have looked. She said again, "How's Lavender? Still going out with her?" I got really flustered and said something brilliant along the lines of "Er... well... sort of... I mean, technically we are still going out, but it's not like we actually spend any time together any more, so I suppose you could say that we're not still going out, but then we haven't officially split up either, so..." She let me drivel on like this for what seemed like a million years, and eventually I completely ran out of words and came to a dead halt. Then there was this agonising silence during which I had time to notice I'd got a question wrong on my essay and actually said this out loud, basically drawing even more attention to the fact that I'm a complete fucking idiot. And then we sat there for God knows how long in embarrassed silence, her reading her book, me just sitting there thinking about the best way to kill myself. Drowning seems like it might be painless. Jesus Christ. It's just embarrassing. I'm embarrassing myself. I'm sure I'm embarrassing her. You're probably even embarrassed reading about it.

Apr 11th

Day 11: Well, I thought I could sink no lower in terms of embarrassing myself in front of her but I think this morning may have plumbed new depths. I should never have tried again after yesterday, I should have just left it. But never let it be said that Ron Weasley did the sensible thing. We were standing outside the library, scene of my previous disaster - you'd think I'd have learned my lesson, wouldn't you? And she was just talking, I don't even know what about, and I suddenly completely lost my head and nearly said, "Can I kiss you?" but what I actually said instead was, "Can I k-hug you?" She looked as though she might laugh, but then didn't, thank Christ. She just said, "*Kug?*" Me, bluffing like mad: "Hug". Because obviously, if I just pretend I didn't say it, it never happened, right? She must have misheard. Yeah, that's it. She said, "I don't think that's a very good idea." I said, "It's only a hug!" She shook her head. She said, "No, *it isn't*." Meanwhile I'd gone in for the hug anyway so by the time she said it, it was already too late. Of course, the patented Weasley two-second hug went completely out of the window. I started counting in my head as usual: one... two... three... four... five... six... seven... eight... nine... She said, quietly, "Ron, let go" and I let go and had to immediately turn round and walk away because I was too embarrassed to even look at her. I avoided her for the rest of the day. I've *still* not been able to look at her tonight. I hope she doesn't think I'm upset with her or anything. I just can't look her in the eye. It must be written all over my face. No, you're quite right,

Hermione, it isn't just a hug. Shit, shit, shit, shit! She definitely knows what I'm trying to do now. And she *doesn't think it's a very good idea*.

Apr 12th

Day 12: Nothing. What, did you think I was going to make an idiot of myself again? Nope, not today. Even I have my limits. It's pointless. I'm never going to do it. She doesn't want me to, anyway. She basically said as much. I give up.

Apr 13th

Day 13: Should probably stop counting then, Ron...

Apr 14th

Day 14: Oh my God, what just happened? I might be going to Paris! *With Hermione!* Well, it probably won't happen, but give me at least a couple of days to be excited about the idea before it all falls through, come on! So, I am playing chess with Hermione in the common room tonight, and she starts talking about how she's always wanted to go to Paris and all the things she'd like to do if she went, and then after a bit she suddenly says, "We could go, if you want." I look up and she's beaming at me. I say, "To Paris?" She says, "Yes, why not?" I say, "Well... because I can't afford it, for a start." She says, "What if there was a way round that?" I say, "How? How would there be a way round that? Are you going to rob Gringotts or something?" She says, "No, but... well, you know Muggles come of age at eighteen rather than seventeen? Well, my dad says he'll pay for me and a friend to go to Paris for a week! You know I've always wanted to go. So, do you want to come?"

I am completely floored. The idea is so fantastic and wonderful and *oh my fucking God I'm going to Paris with Hermione* that I can't actually speak. I stare at her for so long she eventually says, "Well?" She's practically jumping up and down, she's so excited, and it makes me smile. It suddenly occurs to me that she must have been thinking about this for ages if she's been talking to her dad about it. Maybe she *is* interested after all. Maybe she *does* want me to kiss her. Maybe it *was* just the Lavender thing getting in the way. I say, "Yeah, of course, but... he'll pay for it, are you sure?" She says, impatiently, "Yes! For spending money, for the hotel, for everything!" I think, *the hotel!* I say, "I bet he didn't mean me when he said he'd pay for a friend to go as well. I bet he meant a girl friend." She says, "No, he knew who I'd take." I go beetroot. I think, *Did he? Does he? How does he know?*

I didn't even know! I bet her dad will get us separate rooms. In separate hotels, probably. Mine will be in *London*. She carries on talking about all the stuff we might do in Paris and meanwhile in my head I'm still just thinking about the hotel...

I've met her dad loads of times but that was when we were definitely just friends, now if I saw him I know he'd just be thinking, "I know what goes on in your head, you little bastard, and if you think I'm going to pay for you to go to Paris and stay in a hotel with my daughter you've got another think coming. You so much as touch her and I'll make sure you can never have children!" Ha ha. No, there's just no way this is actually going to happen. I refuse to get excited about it, because otherwise I'm just going to be gutted when he says no and we can't go. There's no way I could ever afford to take her to Paris on my own. Even if I could get a summer job it probably still wouldn't be enough. No-one in my family has any money, so it's not like I could even borrow it. I suppose Fred and George are raking in the Galleons at their shop, but I can't see them lending me any. They bloody should, though, it'd be like payback for all the times they tortured me when I was little. No, if her dad says no, there's no way we're going.

And anyway, now I come to think about it, she didn't say it would be as anything more than friends, did she? She did say, he'd pay for a *friend* to go as well. So, she can't have meant anything else by it, she just meant as friends, otherwise surely she wouldn't have been talking to her dad about it? Who asks their dad if he can pay for them to go to Paris with a boyfriend? What dad says yes and genuinely doesn't mind? Nah, that's nuts, I must have heard her wrong. I must have been mistaken. Nothing's actually happened anyway, has it? It's all been in my head. Why would she ask me to go as more than friends when nothing's even happened? And I can hardly ask her, can I? "Hermione, when you said about going to Paris, did you mean we were going as friends or, er, not?" No, I can't ask her that, it would just be too embarrassing. And gutting if she said yes. Jesus, I'm still thinking about the hotel!

Right, now I really have got to dump Lavender. If I don't do it soon I won't be going to Paris. I won't be going anywhere. Although that would definitely be grounds for her dumping me: "Hey, Lavender, I'm going to Paris for a week with Hermione, you don't mind, do you?" Ha ha! Yeah, maybe I should casually drop it into conversation. But then I'd have to actually speak to her, and I've been avoiding her for so long now I've almost forgotten what she looks like. I wish.

Maybe I could just write her a letter, then I wouldn't have to face her. "Dear Lavender, you're dumped, love Ron xx" Alright, it's the coward's way out, but hey, I am a coward. If I wasn't, it wouldn't have taken me, oh Christ, *four months* to dump her, would it? Maybe that's why I'm finding it so hard to kiss Hermione. Some sort of previously undiscovered moral compass that won't let me do it 'til I've dumped Lavender first. Yeah, it's definitely a moral thing rather than me just being a total chicken about it!

Apr 15th

Day 15: Made what was possibly the world's least impressive attempt to chuck Lavender today. Basically, it consisted of this two minute conversation outside the Potions classroom after lessons:

ME: "Alright?"

HER: "Fine, you?"

ME: "Yeah, fine. Listen, Laven-"

HER: "How boring was that lesson? God, I thought it would never end!"

ME: "Yeah, it was really boring. So, um, I was thinking... we've been going out for nearly five months now-"

HER, suddenly throwing herself at me and giving me a big hug for no apparent reason: "You *remembered!* I knew you would!"

ME, massively confused: "Er... what?"

HER, beaming: "I can't believe it's our five month anniversary on Wednesday either!"

ME, stunned: "....."

HER: "I know exactly what you were going to say, too."

ME: "You do?"

HER: "Of course!" (giggling and punching me in the arm quite hard)
"You're *sooo* obvious!"

ME: "I am?"

HER: "To be honest, I've been waiting for you to bring it up for ages..."

ME, apparently now only able to ask stupid questions: "You have?"

HER, punching me in the arm again: "Silly! Of course I have! I've been thinking about it for ages too!"

ME, a bit surprised but mostly incredibly relieved: "Oh... good... that's... that's great. So -"

HER, throwing her arms around my neck and giving me a big kiss: "So I'll see you on Wednesday night! Can't wait!"

She giggles again, gives me a little wave, and runs off.

ME, feebly: "*Hang on* -"

Please tell me, because I've no idea, how the hell I managed to get from dumping her to agreeing to go on another date in the space of two minutes. Shit, Hermione's going to kill me.

Well, only if I *tell* her...

Apr 16th

Day 16: We were talking about Paris again today. She said I'd like France because they have the best food in the world. I remember those funny wobbly puddings from when the Beauxbatons lot were here, so I'm not so sure myself. She said she'd like to show me the museums (yeah, I think not) and we could go up the Eiffel Tower, she was getting really excited about it. I said as long as I don't have to go in one of those planes, there's no way you'd get me in one of those things! I mean, how do they stay up without magic? It's just wrong! She said we could go on something called Eurostar instead, it's like a train but it goes under the sea, and I said that sounds even worse, why can't we just use the Floo Network like normal? She said, that *is* normal, thousands of people do it every day. She started laughing then, she said all these Muggle things she thinks are normal just sound silly when you have to describe them to someone. Then neither of us could stop laughing, everything just seemed really funny. Oh my God, I can't wait for the holidays now, it's going to be excellent! I'm not going to mention it to anybody yet, in case it doesn't happen. Don't want to jinx it. She didn't say anything about inviting Harry, so I'm sort of hoping that she won't. I'd feel a bit bad about it, but that would totally defeat the whole point

of going. Sorry Harry, mate. What's the weather like in Paris at the end of August? Is it hot? I hope it's not hot. There's no way I'm wearing shorts. I don't want to inflict my pasty legs on anyone. Oh my God, it's just going to be the best thing ever! Paris! With Hermione! Aarghhh! I don't even want to get too excited about it in case it falls through. I mean, these things never really happen, do they? You can talk about them all you like, but ninety nine per cent of the time, they just don't happen. Especially to me.

I've never really been on holiday. Well, we went to Egypt that time to visit Bill, and that was really cool, but we never went on holiday when we were kids. Nobody I knew did. Muggles go on holiday. We just played in the fields around the house and stuff. Egypt was with the whole family anyway, so it's not the same as if you got to go off and do your own thing. Going to Paris with just Hermione would be amazing! She asked if there's anything I'd like to do and I said I've no idea, what have they got? Hey, I'm from the country, I don't get out much! London's scary enough. We're not even from the village, we're from the middle of nowhere in Devon, surrounded by fields. Ottery St Catchpole is like the big city to us! I don't know anything about Paris. I'm not sure I could even point to it on a map. I suppose it's a bit like London but everyone speaks French and eats snails. She says when she goes home next time she'll get a book on it and send it to me by owl. I'm not at all sure about this train that goes under the sea though. Can you see the water out of the windows? How weird is that? Not quite as weird as getting on a plane, anyway - and there's no way I'm doing that, even for Hermione. You'd have to knock me out first. You'd have to put some sort of spell on me to go to sleep for a couple of hours, so that when I woke up, we were already there. Or whack me on the back of the head when I wasn't looking. Why can't we just go by Floo Network or Portkey like normal people? What's the point of being a wizard if you have to go by plane? Oh my God! Why can't it be August already?

Apr 17th

Day 17: OH MY GOD! We were just downstairs in the common room and it was pretty late, gone midnight. Harry stood up and yawned and announced, "Well, I'm off to bed. Coming, Ron?" I said, "In a bit," so he said goodnight to us and went off up to bed. And I suddenly realised that it was just me and her and if I was still doing the plan, this would be a perfect chance. Of course, then I started panicking because I couldn't decide whether to actually do something about it or not. We sat there for about five minutes in silence, her reading, me having an argument with myself in my head and trying to persuade myself one way or the other. The usual thing - getting my hopes up and then talking myself out of it again:

"I could do it *now!*"

"Don't be daft, she doesn't want you to! She basically said as much!"

"But maybe she *does*, maybe it's just because of Lavender!"

"Yeah, who you *still* haven't dumped, remember?"

"But what about Paris? She asked me to go to *Paris* with her!"

"As friends! Were you not listening? She specifically said, "for me and a friend". That's you! You're a *friend!* Could she spell it out any clearer?"

"But she waited up for me! She's sitting right there! This might be the best chance I ever get!"

"Yeah, and you'll fuck it up if you try anything now. Sort out the Lavender thing first!"

"But this is perfect! She's right there! There's firelight and everything!"

"Well, alright, but don't say I didn't warn you..."

"Fine, I'm going to do it, I'm going to get up and walk over there and - "

And then Hermione stands up and stretches and says, "I think I'm going to call it a night." I say, trying not to sound too disappointed, "Oh. Okay. 'Night, then." She says, "Night, Ron" and goes off toward the stairs to the girls dorm. I don't even have enough time to curse myself for my rubbishness though, because three seconds later she comes back again. She comes up behind me, leans down and puts her hands on my shoulders, kisses me very quickly on the top of the head, and whispers, "Night..." I swing round, but she's already halfway up the stairs to her room where, obviously, I can't follow. Jesus Christ! What was *that*? Was that what I think it was? Was that a "Yes, I do want you to kiss me, keep trying" kiss? Or was it just a "Goodnight, this doesn't mean anything" kiss? She's never done that before, though. Well, she *has*, twice. But only twice, ever. Two kisses on the cheek in nearly six years. Once last September when I gave her her birthday present. Once in the first term of fifth year just before that nightmare first Quidditch match.

And thinking about it, she did *try* to kiss me on the cheek last Christmas as well, but I wouldn't let her, like an idiot. It was when my dad was in hospital and we thought he was going to die. Jesus, I thought this Christmas was

bad, but *last* year... last year was just awful. She was supposed to be in France with her parents but she turned up in London instead. She tried to give me a hug, but I pushed her away. I think I knew that if anyone tried to hug me I'd just start crying, and that was so *not* going to happen in front of her. Anyway, that would have been a "sorry about your dad" sympathy kiss, if I'd let her do it. Those are all pretty good reasons, aren't they? Thank you. Good luck. Sorry. But tonight wasn't anything like that. Tonight I didn't do anything to give her a reason. I hadn't just given her a present, I wasn't about to play the worst Quidditch match of my life, and none of my relatives were ill. She just... she just *kissed* me, that's all. For no reason. Unless... Oh, Jesus. She wants me to kiss her. She does. I'm sure of it. She *wants* me to!

Apr 18th

Day 18: Well, it's been an *interesting* evening, to say the least! I had one thought in my head all day - kissing Hermione, what else? - so of course, I completely forget about the date with Lavender, don't I? At least, until she corners me after dinner and demands we go for a *walk*. She's got such a dangerous face on I'm convinced she's finally going to dump me, so I say, "Yeah, alright" and try and look upset. Which is pretty hard, because I'm so excited about the idea that in ten minutes time I might actually be free to go and kiss Hermione that my heart's thumping and I can hardly keep the grin off my face. Anyway, we end up in an empty classroom somewhere, I don't even know where, and the second we get inside Lavender shoves me against the door and kisses me and tries to lift my t-shirt over my head. Which is just about the *last* thing I was expecting! I push her off and say, a bit impatiently, "What did you want to talk to me about, Lavender?" She slides her arms around my waist and smiles and says, "It's been five months. I think I'm *ready*..." I say, stupidly, "Ready for what?" "You know... to *do* it..." I say, "*You're joking!*" and she obviously mistakes my horrified expression for joy because she giggles and says, "*I thought* you'd be pleased! Happy Anniversary!" I just stare at her with my mouth open, too stunned to speak.

She takes my hand then and slides it inside her shirt - *oh my God!* It's been so long since we did this I'd almost forgotten what it was like. That's my excuse, anyway. That's my totally pathetic excuse for the next two minutes of breathless snogging during which I don't think about Hermione at all because I've got my hands up Lavender's top and she's got her tongue in my mouth. In fact, I can safely say there was no thinking involved whatsoever. God knows what might have happened, because I was pretty carried away there for a while. Notice I say what *might* have happened.

Because then she tries to shove her hand down my trousers, and I completely freak out. I push her away so hard she falls sideways into a desk, and shout, "What the hell are you doing?" She's actually got the nerve to look offended. "I thought you wanted -" "Well, you thought wrong then, didn't you? Jesus *Christ*, Lavender!" "Most boys would be pleased if their girlfriends wanted to, *you know....*" "Yeah, well, *sorry*, but you should *warn* a bloke if you're going to do something like that, that's all!"

I'm so freaked out I start pacing up and down, swearing a lot and not knowing what to do with my hands. She just watches me suspiciously. Then she says, in what she obviously assumes is a sympathetic voice, "I promise I won't laugh." I stop pacing. "*What?*" I hadn't even thought about that! She says, again, "I won't laugh. It's okay to be nervous." "I'm not nervous!" "Well, you obviously *are*, but that's fine. There's other stuff we can do. Whenever you're ready." "*Ready?*" She gets that coy look on her face again. "You know. To *show* me...." I'm so horrified I can't actually speak, I just stare at her. There is no fucking way on God's earth I am ever showing her *anything*. I'd rather chop it off. I back away towards the door and say, "I've got to go now!" My voice sounds really high and panicky in my head. She follows me out into the corridor and whines, "I thought that's what you *wanted...*" There are other people around now. I could really do without having this conversation out here. I shout "Sorry!" over my shoulder and practically run all the way back to Gryffindor Tower to make sure I get there before she does. I just want to get up to my room so I can carry on freaking out without anybody watching.

Of course, the second I get back to the common room I promptly bump into Hermione, who waves and smiles and beckons me over, so I can't even pretend I haven't seen her. She's just about the last person I want to talk to. I always feel like she can read my mind anyway, and now I feel like she can tell where I've been, where my hands have been, where Lavender's hands have been, like she can smell Lavender on me or something. Actually, I feel like I need a bath. I feel sort of dirty, and not in a good way. She can see straight away I'm in a bad mood, so I tell her I've just had a row with Lavender. I don't mention the snogging, which I already feel guilty as hell about. I definitely don't mention anything *else* that might have happenedNot that that helps. She raises her eyebrows at me. I say, defensively, "*What?*" She says, "*Well?*" "Well, *what?*" "Oh, my God! Did you *tell* her?" "Oh. No." "No?!" "No." She says, "Hah!" I say "Look, it wasn't like that. I didn't really get a chance-" She snaps, "Fine!" and is clearly really annoyed with me. I say "Sorry, I just -" She says, "It's nothing to do with me *what* you do!" and picks up her book and starts reading it. I just stand there like an idiot for a couple of minutes until it starts to get obvious

that she's not going to talk to me, then I say, "Well, goodnight, then." Nothing. No reply. She doesn't even look up. I think it's officially time to brave Stage One.

Apr 19th

Day 19: Hermione didn't speak to me all morning. I spent the whole of Double Potions trying to break down her defences with a lot of pathetic grovelling: "Your potion's much better than mine!" "I'll do that for you!" "Oh, well done, top marks on your essay again!" Then, when none of that seemed to be working, I got a bit desperate and blurted out, "I like your shoes!" (Well, it always worked with Lavender...) She finally caved in during lunch, after suffering twenty minutes of me practically pleading with her to talk to me again. "Pleeeease say something! I'm really, really sorry! Here, have some potatoes. Do you want any peas? Let me get you the peas. I promise I won't throw them at you this time..." That did it. I could see her struggling not to smile. She said, "Alright! I give in! I'll talk to you, just stop being so nice to me!" I said, pretending to be hurt, "What do you mean? I'm *always* nice to you!" She just laughed and told me to shut up and pass the potatoes, you idiot. And just like that, the world was good again...

Apr 20th

Day 20: I was going to dump Lavender today, but I've just remembered it's our Apparition test tomorrow, and I can hardly chuck her just before the exam, can I? What if she fails and blames it on me, I'd never hear the last of it. And let's face it, I could do without the distraction myself. No, I'll tell her next week. Just get the Apparition test in the bag first. Yeah.

Apr 22nd

Day 22: Hooray, Lavender has dumped me! *Finally!* She saw me coming out of the boys' dorm last night with Harry and Hermione, only Harry was wearing his invisibility cloak, so she obviously thought it was just me and Hermione up there and was understandably not very happy about it. She totally freaked out, actually. There was a lot of yelling and crying. Apparently I'm a useless boyfriend (fair enough), a rubbish kisser (again, probably fair enough), she could do a lot better than me anyway (debatable), and I'll be sorry when she's gone. Sorry? I couldn't be happier! It's like a giant weight's been lifted off my back! Alright, I do feel a *bit* guilty, but probably not as much as I should. Every time I saw her today she burst

into tears. I feel like an arsehole but at least it's finally over. Hermione keeps giving me encouraging little smiles.

Oh my God, as well, when Lavender is going mental at me, she shouts, "What were you doing up there alone with *her*?" and I say, "Nothing", but I'm thinking, it wouldn't have been nothing if I'd had the chance. It certainly wasn't nothing in my head. The whole time we are up there she is sitting on my bed and my imagination just goes into overdrive. I am hardly listening to what either of them are saying. Hermione's talking about you-know-who and all I can think is, "She's sitting on my bed!" Alright, so I'm shallow. Have you *been* reading this diary? Anyway, I challenge anyone to have stood there with her sitting on their bed - actually leaning back on her elbows at one point - and not have had some immensely shallow thoughts in their head. Harry's talking about serious things and I'm just thinking, "Fuck off, Harry!" Only half-jokingly. Sorry, Harry, mate. When am I going to get ten minutes with her alone with a freaking bed in the room ever again? (Actually, with five beds, but let's not go into that!) Anyway, it's all over with Lavender, so now I can think about that stuff legally, if you know what I mean. I might even get beyond just thinking about it. Is it bad not even waiting 24 hours since splitting up with Lavender before plotting to jump on Hermione? Well, not plotting. Planning. No, not even planning. Hoping. Thinking about it. And not jumping on. Well, maybe jumping on. More sort of lurching towards. More sort of standing there leaning in that general direction. Leaning with intent. Alright, maybe just standing there imagining it and not actually moving. Anyway, it's pretty bad, either way. But come on, give me a break, I've been waiting years for this! This is the nearest I've ever got. This is definitely the first time I've been pretty much sure she feels the same way. Well, maybe not *exactly* the same way, she's a *nice* girl! Jesus, I'm going nuts! I feel really restless. Might get up and go and play myself at chess. Oh my GOD!!!

Apr 23rd

Day 23: So much happened the other night I keep remembering bits of it. I'm sure you'll be unsurprised to hear I failed my Apparition test. I was pissed off at the time but now I honestly couldn't give a toss. It seems like years ago already. Oh, and Ginny split up with Dean as well. So it was a good night all round for us Weasleys on the romance front! Can't pretend I'm not pleased about that one too. As long as she doesn't start going out with Seamus. Anyway, that's all old news. You want to know whether anything's happened yet with Hermione, don't you? Whether I've made an idiot of myself by jumping on her or in some other way fucking up? Have

some faith! I've not fucked up yet... It's only been two days, there's still plenty of time! For me to fuck up, ha ha...

Apr 24th

Day 24: It's been three whole days! Why can't I do it? There was a perfect chance today and I totally chickened out, it was pathetic. We'd just taken a short cut down some side stairs so there was no-one around, and she was smiling at me for some reason so I asked her, "What are you smiling at? Have I spilt something on myself again?" She said, "I don't know, I'm just happy". I thought, I could do it *now...* But I didn't. We carried on walking and twenty seconds later we were back in a busy corridor again. And that was it, another chance wasted. I think we've established that it wasn't some moral thing that wouldn't let me kiss Hermione while I was still technically going out with Lavender. I'm just crap.

Apr 25th

Day 25: She's seriously messing with my head this week. We are in Herbology this afternoon when suddenly she touches my arm and makes me nearly jump out of my skin. She says, "There's an ant on your arm." She starts playing with the ant, pushing it about with her finger, which means of course, that she's basically *stroking my arm*. My heart just about stops beating, I can tell you. I am frozen to my chair. I am really hoping she won't notice that my skin has come up in goosebumps. I'm hoping they'll be hidden by the freckles. She does notice, of course. She says sorry, she must have cold hands. I say quickly, "Either that or it's a polar ant", and that makes us both laugh, thank Christ, but I am still really fucking tense. She carries on playing with the ant. I'm wishing she would stop, because although I don't want her to take her hand away, it's just about killing me having her touch me and having to just sit there and not do anything about it. Which is when I get this sudden flash of inspiration and I pick up the ant on a piece of parchment and I move it onto her arm instead. And the ant crawls straight back off and onto my arm again. She laughs and says it obviously only likes me and it must be a girl ant. And then Seamus walks past, sees us looking at this ant on my arm, and obviously thinks it'll be hilarious to whack me on the arm and squash the ant. I call him something offensive that makes her go, "Ron!" and slap my hand, but it's too late, I'm already furious and can't explain why, so of course the moment's completely ruined. She shouldn't go around stroking people's arms like that. I'm sure she has no idea what it does to me. And if she does, she definitely shouldn't do it, unless she wants me to crack and kiss her in front of the whole class!

Apr 26th

Day 26: So I am walking along the corridor between lessons this morning and I hear her calling my name. I stop and wait for her, and she runs up laughing and all out of breath. She says, "I've been shouting "Ron!" for ages, why do you have to walk so fast?" I say, "Long legs. Sorry." She says, "I can always see you coming a mile off." I laugh, and say something about my hair being like a sodding beacon. She says, "Sometimes it's like everything else is in black and white and your hair is the only thing in colour." She stops laughing. She says, "Oh." She blushes. She drops her book. We both go to pick it up at the same time and accidentally bang our heads together. We both say sorry at exactly the same time. We both laugh nervously. We both stand there like idiots grinning at each other. I think if the wind changes I won't be able to stop grinning. My heart is pounding. My head hurts. She's chewing her lip. I can't help staring at her mouth. I think: *kiss her*. Do it now. Now, you idiot. Now. Now! NOW! I don't, of course. I am frozen to the spot. I just stand there. Years pass. And then she says, "Anyway, I'd better go, I've got to take this book back to the library." AARGH!!!

Apr 27th

Day 27: It was one of those really nice long warm Spring evenings today. She came up to me in the entrance hall after dinner and she was standing in the doorway with the sun streaming through her hair so she looked *really* good, Jesus, it was all I could do not to jump on her right there! My head actually went all swimmy for a few seconds. She said, "It's a nice evening out, isn't it?" and I said, far too quickly, "Yeah, do you want to go for a walk?" Definitely meaning a *walk*, too! She said, "Oh, yes, that's a brilliant idea, I don't know why I didn't think of it myself!" and laughed, and then bloody bloody Harry came up behind her and asked, "What's a brilliant idea?" She gave me this little half smile and said, "Ron was just saying it's a nice evening for a walk." Harry said, "Yeah, or for Quidditch practice... that *is* a brilliant idea, Ron, well done!" And that was my whole evening gone right there. I grinned at them both and tried to pretend I was over the moon about the idea but in my head I was just thinking, "*Motherf-!*"

Apr 28th

Day 28: Saturday afternoon. I'm in bed. Don't get excited or anything, I'm ill. Must have eaten something last night that disagreed with me because I started feeling really feverish and light-headed halfway through Quidditch

practice, and by the time I got back to the common room I was seeing double, so I just went to bed. Woke up a couple of hours later, threw up, and spent the rest of the night with my head in the toilet. Harry offered to go and fetch Madame Pomfrey but I told him not to bother, I'd just sleep it off. It's about four o'clock now. So of course that means I haven't seen Hermione at all today. Harry did bring a message from her, though: "Go to the hospital wing!" Great. If you'd told me yesterday I was going to spend the whole day in bed, this wouldn't exactly have been what I'd had in mind. Honestly, sometimes I wonder if I do it on purpose. Oh, well. Might as well go back to sleep, I suppose. Nighty night.

Later: Hermione was just here! I'm lying on the bed dozing and I hear someone come in, so I look up, and it's *her*. She says, "I thought you might be hungry", and brings out from behind her back the frankly fantastic sight of a plateful of cakes. I tell her she's wonderful and she laughs and says, "I know!" She comes over and sits down on the edge of the bed watching me shovelling chocolate cake in my mouth at record speed and says, "Slow down, for God's sake, you'll make yourself sick again!" I say, "I don't care" and then, without thinking, "Pull the curtains!" She looks a bit stunned. "What?" "Pull the curtains!" I don't know what got into me, I really don't. Anyway, she does, she stands up and pulls the curtains around the bed and then climbs onto the end of it and sits there sideways on with her legs hanging over the edge. Meanwhile I'm just thinking, shit, we're up here alone and we're sitting on my bed, and she's probably expecting me to *kiss* her, and my mouth feels like something died in it. Shit, this is perfect, and I can't do it. Not because I'm scared or anything. Just because when I do kiss her - and I mean *when*, not if - I refuse to be wearing freaking pyjamas.

Desperately trying to keep it light, I offer her a jam tart, and she shakes her head and then starts laughing. I ask what's funny and she says, "I was just imagining Lavender's face if she walked in now. Then she really *would* have something to complain about!" I say, "I don't care. I've got *you* on my side." - covering quickly - "For spells, I mean. You know, if she was going to hex me or something. Sure you won't have a jam tart?" "Well, maybe just the one." I give a little cheer and she laughs. I say, "Bet you can't put a whole one in your mouth." "Of course I can. Doesn't mean I *will*, though..." "Chicken." "Excuse me, just because you eat like a human dustbin doesn't mean the rest of us should. Honestly, I don't know where you put it all." I laugh and say, "Like you said, it just goes to my legs!" And without thinking I stretch out my leg and prod her thigh with my toe. I can see her tense up straight away. There is quite a long and awkward silence during which she stares at her feet and I fiddle with the icing on a slice of Bakewell tart.

Eventually she says, obviously trying to keep it light as well, "Have you been wearing those pyjamas all day?" "Yeah, why, do I smell or something?" "Not from here." "Yeah, you'd better not come any closer!" I meant that as a joke but really wish I'd phrased it better. Oh, well, might as well go the whole hog: "I haven't brushed my teeth, either." She laughs. "Well, that's certainly good to know." "Actually, I'm not really in a fit state to receive visitors. Maybe you should come back tomorrow when I've had a bath." Oh my God! Why is it everything we say seems to have some sort of double meaning? Her: "Well, that *is* a tempting offer..." Me, slightly hysterically: "Hahaha! Yeah, I know how to show a girl a good time!" "That's not what I heard!" "Well, you'll just have to come back tomorrow and find out, won't you?" "Yes, I will." "Yes, you will." "Okay, then." "Okay."

We grin at each other then look away quickly. I can hear the blood pounding in my head. There is another quite long silence, then she reaches forward, picks up the last jam tart from the plate, and slowly, carefully, crams the whole thing in her mouth and grins at me. I'm so surprised all I can do is say, "*Hey-*" and watch her slide off the bed, push the curtains aside, and disappear, laughing as she goes. Jesus. I'm going to make sure I brush my teeth really, really well tomorrow morning!

Apr 29th

Day 29: Sunday night. Nine o' clock. I'm in bed again. Don't get excited. Oh, you weren't? Yeah, I know, I'm starting to think this is never going to happen as well. Basically, didn't wake up 'til half two so was obviously a lot more wiped out than I thought. Had a long bath, brushed my teeth probably better than I've ever brushed them in my life, got dressed in the cleanest, least shit clothes I own - no, not my school uniform. Very funny, though - and just made it downstairs for the last ten minutes of dinner. I sat down opposite her and next to Harry and she said, sounding a bit surprised, "I didn't realise you were coming down for dinner. I was going to bring you up another plate of food." I said, "Nah, I feel loads better, thanks. Anyway, Sunday night's steak and kidney pie night!" I was halfway through my first helping of pie before I realised that since I'd come downstairs, she now didn't have any excuse to come *up*. Of course, I hadn't thought about that, I'd just been thinking of my stomach. I couldn't even say anything to her about it, not in front of Harry. Couldn't apologise, couldn't even mention it. After dinner we all went back up to the common room and Harry wanted to talk Quidditch tactics, so I knew straight away I wasn't going to get another opportunity tonight. My best chance, and I wasted it for the sake of two slices of - admittedly very good - steak and kidney pie. I ended up just calling it quits and going to bed at half eight. I was still really tired, and to

be honest, I was glad of the excuse. It was really hard sitting there with her and thinking about what might have happened if I wasn't such a *great big stupid fucking idiot*.

April 30th

Day 30: So... So, this afternoon we are walking back from the library during a free period. Harry is still stalking Malfoy every spare minute he gets, so I actually have that little tosser, of all people, to thank for these once a week opportunities where I get her on her own for a whole hour. We are talking about Paris. She's all happy and excited, and this seems like it might be a good time to ask something I'm still not sure about, that I think I need to be sure about before I can do anything else. I wait for a gap in the conversation and take a deep breath and say, "I need to ask you a question." She stops and turns to face me expectantly. I open my mouth to speak and she interrupts. She says, "The answer's yes, by the way." I say, "You don't even know what the question is yet." She says, "Is it a good question?" I say, "That depends on whether there's a good answer." She says, "Is the good answer yes?" I say, "Actually, no, the good answer's no." She says, "Fire away, then!" She is grinning at me. I feel like I'm losing track of this conversation already. I start to speak and she interrupts again. She says, "No!" and laughs. I say, "Can I at least ask the bloody question first?" She says sorry. I feel so hot suddenly I think I might burst into flames. I say, "When you asked me to go to Paris... ah... did you mean, er, you know... um... just as friends, or...?" She laughs again. She goes red. I know my face is redder than my hair. She says, "Um..." She looks down at the floor. She says, "That is a good question." I say, "Yeah, but is there a good answer?" She says, "Yes." I say, "Yes?!" She says, "Oh! I mean, no!" She can't seem to stop laughing. I say, "Make your mind up, woman!" And she says, "There's a good answer."

My head swims and I think I might actually faint. My mouth goes dry. I open and close it a few times but that doesn't seem to help. I manage to croak, "Oh... good..." but that seems to be all the instructions I'm getting from my brain. Please don't tell me I'm just going to stand here and not do anything. Please, God. I can hear my breathing. I swear I can even hear myself blinking. And I can't believe I've got the time to actually notice this when she's standing there waiting for me to kiss her, and I am not doing it. I'm not doing anything. We stand there grinning for what seems like forever but is probably only about eight seconds. I tell myself, "Okay, I'm going to do it, I've just got to move my le-" And while I am thinking this, she suddenly steps right up to me and stands on tiptoe and leans up and kisses me on the mouth. Oh my god. OH MY GOD! I can't even write this.

I'll just say it again: *Oh my god*. That's what I'm thinking, in as much as I'm thinking anything at all, because my brain has just exploded. Oh my god, I am kissing Hermione. Oh my god, she's got her hand on the small of my back. Oh my god, I am putting my arms around her waist and pulling her against me. Oh my god, she isn't pushing me away or slapping me or giving any sign of wanting it to stop. Oh my god, I've been waiting my whole *life* for this moment. Oh my god, you could kill me now and I'd die happy. Oh my god, oh my god, oh my GOD!!!!

Seconds or minutes or maybe even centuries later, I've no idea, there is a loud cough somewhere nearby and we both jump out of our skins. Bloody Filch is grinning at us about ten feet away. When I remember this moment later, I *really* don't want him to be in it. He says, "Shouldn't we be in lessons?" She says, "No, we shouldn't. It's a free period. Excuse us" and she grabs my hand (!!!) and pulls me down the corridor and round the corner out of his sight. Unfortunately there are loads more people about, so she has to let go again, and anyway the bell goes and we have to go off to bloody lessons. There is the world's most incoherent goodbye where she says, "Oh, um, I'd better... er..." and I say, "Yeah, er, I should...er..." I haven't been able to get her on her own since. When I see her again later on in the common room with Harry we can't even look at each other, let alone anything else. Harry notices we're both almost mute, which has never happened before, and assumes we've had a row. I'm so wired I can't stop drumming my foot on the floor. Apart from that the evening is a complete blank. Possibly I'm in shock. I can't think about anything else apart from kissing her again. I can't sit still. I can't concentrate on anything. I am going *mental*. If you expect me to get any sleep at all tonight, you've got another think coming! Bloody hell!

Ps: I thought I did well there, writing everything down in the right order and all, building the tension, ha ha! 'Cos I *really* just wanted to write **SHE KISSED ME!!! I KISSED HER!!! I KISSED HERMIONE!!! ON THE MOUTH AND EVERYTHING!!! OH! MY!! GOD!!!!**

MAY

May 1st

I've just been going bananas today. Haven't been able to concentrate on anything. Can't sit still, can't stop fidgeting, no idea what people are saying to me, my nails are practically bitten down to the quick... Didn't get a chance to see her on her own all bloody day. I went downstairs to the common room a bit earlier than usual hoping I might see her for five minutes before breakfast, but then Harry came down as well so I had to go to breakfast with him and didn't get to see her. Ten minutes later she turned up in the dinner hall and we gave each other these little embarrassed grins and then looked away really quickly in case anyone saw. The whole day just seemed to drag like mad. It was like everything was going extra slowly just to spite me. I swear once I looked up at the clock and it was half an hour *earlier* than the last time I looked! In Potions Slughorn split us into pairs so I got stuck with Harry again and didn't get a chance to speak to her all lesson. Then we had Charms and Flitwick set a test, so nobody got to do any talking. Then it was lunchtime and I was sure I'd be able to get her on her own for at least five sodding minutes, but no, Harry was there the whole time. We were sitting there talking to each other, but about some complete rubbish, as though nothing had happened! It was just ridiculous. Then we had double Defence against the Dark Arts, so obviously there was no possible chance of talking to her in that. It was even worse because she was sitting next to me, so we brushed against each other a couple of times by accident and that was just *torture*. Snape was in a particularly bad mood as well. He had a go at me about something stupid like not having my shirt tucked in - when do I ever have my sodding shirt tucked in? And then again when Harry was whispering to me and made me laugh and I got the blame for it. And then *again* when he asked me a question he must have known I wouldn't know the answer to which just gave him an excuse to make me look stupid in front of the whole class. Five points deducted from Gryffindor every time too. And he set us a huge essay, so that's my weekend screwed as well. Aargh, I hate him! Maybe Filch told him he saw us kissing yesterday and he's decided to spoil my day because he hates to see people happy. Wouldn't put it past him. Git.

So, anyway, after that two hours of joy, we had a study period which we couldn't talk in because it was supervised. Then she had to go to the library (*Hermione! I'm going mental here! Really, the library?*), and then it was dinner - I've never enjoyed dinner less - and now she's gone off to have a bath (*For the love of Merlin, woman, what are you trying to do to*

me?) and I'm up here getting all my frustration down on paper. Then I'm going straight back downstairs and if I have to sit in that common room with her all sodding night until everyone other fucker has gone to bed, I will.

Oh, my God! So half an hour later we were back in the common room and we were all supposedly doing our homework, but it was impossible to concentrate with her sitting opposite me. I kept glancing up at her trying to catch her eye so I could, I don't know, somehow make her realise I needed to see her, by the power of blinking or something. And she kept catching me looking and it started getting silly. She mouthed "Stop looking at me", and I mouthed back, "Well, stop looking at *me* then" and she went red and laughed. I love it when she laughs. I have to keep thinking of things to say to keep her laughing. I always wondered what the point of me was and it turns out that's it. Pretty happy with that, actually. Anyway, her laughing made Harry ask what was funny, so we had to try and at least pretend to be writing our essays for a while, but I know I wasn't writing anything, and I couldn't hear the scratching of her quill so I'm pretty sure she wasn't either. And then after a bit she kicked my leg to get my attention and made a point of deliberately pushing a small piece of parchment off the edge of the table. I leant down to pick it up as casually as possible and it said "Meet me in Myrtle's bathroom in ten minutes." And then she stood up and said, loudly, "Oh, no, I've just remembered I've got to take a book back to the library! I'll see you later!" and she picked up her bag and hurried off. And I sat there with my heart thumping desperately trying to think of some excuse to leave, but fortunately Harry said he'd left something in our room and went off to get it, and the second he'd gone I shoved everything into my bag and legged it out into the corridor and down the several flights of stairs to Myrtle's bathroom, still slightly laughing at Harry's expression when he came back and saw nobody there. And when I got there she was already waiting for me and we grinned at each other, and she said, "All I've been thinking about all day today is doing *this* -" and, well, let's just say there was a lot of kissing! I know I don't believe in you, God, but thank you, thank you, thank you! Whatever bad things I've done before now, if you can just make sure this keeps happening, I promise I'll never say "fuck" in a church again...

May 3rd

Anyway, so, where was I? Oh yeah, I was kissing Hermione in the girls' bathroom. Five times yesterday and four times today! You will not get much more detail out of me than that, though, because obviously it would be ungentlemanly to tell! I will say that at one point I lifted her up on the sink unit and - well, maybe not... ha ha! Not *that*, if that's what you're

thinking. God, your mind is worse than mine! Just snogging. Although there's no "just" about it, it's the best thing ever! No, mainly because I was starting to get a bit of a cricked neck. She's at least six inches shorter than me, she needs the extra height. It's a shame she's not the kind of girl who wears heels! Nah, it's not actually, Lavender was the kind of girl who wore heels, and she never stopped going on about her bloody shoes. Jesus, Lavender's shoes. They were like an early warning system. Clatter, clatter, clatter... "ROOOON!!!" And I'd have about two seconds to force a smile on my face before she threw herself at me and nearly knocked me over. It was a bit like going out with an Alsatian. Anyway, I don't want to think about Lavender. I'm with Hermione now. With Hermione. I like the way that looks written down. I like the way it sounds as well. Oh, I just like everything about it!

Is it me or is this kind of weird? Not in a bad way, obviously. It's just, well, weird. Me and her. Her and me. It's the sink that's the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets as well, that's *really* weird. God, that seems like a million years ago. I think if you'd told me then - when I was *twelve* - that we'd be doing this five years later I'd have laughed at you. Actually, I'd probably have pulled a face and made puking noises. Yeah, because I'm so much more mature now, obviously!

May 4th

She's started to use "I've got to take a book back to the library" as a secret code between us. We'll be with Harry in the common room, or at lunch, or walking between lessons, and she'll suddenly say, "Oh! I've just remembered I've got to take a book back to the library! See you later!" and rush off. And then I've got five minutes to think of an excuse to get away too, and then I pelt up to Myrtle's bathroom as fast as I can. Sometimes I can't even wait the five minutes and I race up the stairs so fast I actually get there before her, all out of breath. Sometimes I give myself a stitch. When I want to meet her there, I say, "Hey, Hermione, didn't you have to take a book back to the library?" and then she'll say, "Yes, you're right, I'd completely forgotten, I'd better go and do it right now" or "I haven't got the time now, I'll probably do it after lunch." Or before Potions. Or during our free period later. And I always go running. I'm completely at her beck and call, and I wouldn't swap it for anything. And nor would you either, so you can shut up! Funnily enough, Myrtle's never even there anymore. Maybe she's got a new toilet to hang about in. Maybe Hermione's paid her off! Either way, I'm quite happy not to have her there watching us, that would be a bit weird. Plus she'd probably shoot her mouth off to anyone else who came in.

May 5th

We're sitting in the common room this evening and I'm so restless I can't stop fidgeting and tapping my feet on the floor. And after about half an hour I can't stand it anymore and I say, "Oh, I've just remembered I've got to take a book back to the library" and they both just stare at me. I go, "What?" She starts to laugh. Harry says, "Since when have you borrowed books from the library?" I go red. She's cracking up now. Her laughing makes Harry laugh as well. I feel a bit stupid. It sounded cooler when I said it in my head and they weren't both laughing at the idea of me reading a book. I snap and tell them both to fuck off and storm off out into the corridor, where I head for the bathroom because that's where my feet always take me these days, but to be honest I'm not even sure she's going to come. I wait there a good twenty minutes feeling increasingly stupid, but I'm too embarrassed to go back downstairs when I've overreacted so badly. I'm in one of the cubicles when I hear someone come in. She calls my name. I tell her where I am and try not to sound as grumpy as I feel. She pushes the door open and stands there looking amused. She starts to laugh again, and this makes me laugh too, although I'm trying not to because I'm still annoyed with her. She says, "That was brilliant!" I go "What?" She says, "You. *I've just remembered I've got to take a book back to the library.*" I say, "It wasn't supposed to be funny." She says, "Oh, don't sulk. It was funny! I thought I'd get a stitch, I laughed so much. Bit dangerous in front of Harry, though. You nearly gave away our secret code!" I say, "Well, I didn't mean to, and I don't see why it's so funny that I might actually read a book now and then." She sighs. She says, "You're determined to sulk about this, aren't you?" I start to protest and she pushes me back into the cubicle and says "Shut up, Ron..." and for the next fifteen minutes or so I shut up... Ah, if only you could see the stupid great big grin on my face while I'm writing this!

May 6th

We were in Herbology this afternoon, and the rest of the class were all paying attention to Madame Sprout, and when no-one was looking I had a moment of recklessness and *stroked her hand* under the desk. And she jerked it away really quickly, and looked at me as if to say, "What the hell are you doing?" but then put her hand back in exactly the same place. Took me half an hour to get a chance to do it again, and the next time she didn't move her hand away at all. We've not been able to look each other in the eye since. At least, not without grinning. I don't know how the hell I got any work done at all today.

May 7th

It's the last match of the season on Saturday. Gryffindor vs. Ravenclaw. I've hardly had time to think about it, to be honest. Which does at least mean I've not been sick yet. I have been telling Harry I'm still throwing up though, because frankly it's a great excuse to rush off for half an hour and meet Hermione. Let's face it, sooner or later he's probably going to wonder why Hermione needs to take books back to the library four times a day! Although to be honest I'm not sure Harry would even notice. Every time I see him these days he's staring off into space. I have to repeat everything about three times. She says maybe he's worried about you-know-what and just doesn't want to tell us. I can see her starting to feel guilty about it. I've been trying to calm her down by saying he's probably just nervous about the match. Which would make a change, wouldn't it? Harry being worried about it and me not being that bothered!

Anyway, what with all the extra Quidditch practice this week and trying to arrange little meetings with Hermione several times a day, I don't have time to think about the fact that the whole tournament's still wide open and everything, but everything, depends on this match. If we win by more than 300 points, we could actually *win the cup!* If we win by less than 300 points, we come second, if we lose by less than 100 we come third, and if we lose by more than 100... well, we come last. For the first time in two centuries, as McGonagall keeps helpfully reminding us. So, hey, there's a lot riding on my performance on Saturday, to say the least. And am I nervous? Sort of. Now it's so close I am starting to get a bit worried about it. But it could be a lot worse. It would be nice to win the cup in front of her, though. She didn't see the final last year, so that sort of took away from us winning a bit. I'd like it if she could be proud of me. Although I suppose at least if we lose we won't have been beaten by bloody Slytherin. Can you imagine Malfoy's face?

May 8th

She starts laughing mid-snog this afternoon, which of course puts me on the defensive straight away: "What's so funny?" She says she's just remembering that time I obviously wanted to say, "Can I kiss you?" but changed my mind halfway through and actually said, "Can I kug you?" instead. She says it made her laugh for days afterwards because I looked so serious denying I'd said it and insisting I'd definitely said "hug". I'm not really sure what to say to that. I say, "Well, I'm glad you thought it was funny, me making an idiot of myself." She says, no, she liked the idea of kugging. She says, "It's kissing and hugging at the same time, what's not

to like?" That makes me laugh as well. I ask if I can say I invented it if it catches on, and she says she thinks we should get a joint credit. I say, chancing my arm a bit, "So... can I kug you?" She says, "You can kug me anytime!" and we both completely crack up. And then, well... there's so much kugging we don't hear the bell and are late for Potions. I can't look at Harry at all for the rest of the lesson in case he can read it all over my face, and I can't look at her either because it makes me want to laugh. *Kugging hell!*

May 9th

Jesus Christ. Bit of a scary day today. We all had a free period after breakfast so me and Hermione arranged to meet in the usual place - she said she had to go and see Professor Vector about an essay and I just said I was feeling sick again. I don't think Harry was even listening anyway, he was off on another one of his Malfoy-hunting missions. Anyway, so I get up to Myrtle's and there's a bit of kissing and then she asks, as she always does, what I'd told Harry. I say I told him I was feeling ill but that it doesn't matter anyway because he's off chasing Malfoy around the castle with his bloody map. I go to kiss her again but she suddenly shouts, "Map!" I say, "Yeah, you know, the one that shows where everyone in the castle is -" She says, "I know what it is, you idiot! Ron, he'll be able to see *us* on it!" We stare at each other in horror for about six seconds. I can see her starting to panic. She's not good when she panics. Unfortunately I'm no help either because my mind has gone completely blank too. Thank Christ, eventually she comes to her senses, pushes me backwards towards the door and hisses, "Go!" I still haven't really taken it all in. I say, "What?" She almost shouts, "GO!"

I pick up my bag and get out of there and walk away as fast as I can, almost running down several random corridors with no real idea of where I'm going. My head's swimming and my heart's beating so fast that I actually do start to feel a bit sick and have to sit on some stairs and put my head between my knees for about ten minutes. And then I decide to go back to the dorm and I'm just walking down the stairs when I see Harry legging it up them the other way. He's absolutely wet through and seems to be covered in blood. I don't even have time to react because when he sees me he shouts, "Quick! Give me your Potions textbook!" This doesn't make any sense at all, but I get it out of my bag and hand it over. He starts running again and yells over his shoulder that he'll explain later. I shout after him, "Is that blood? Harry!" but he doesn't stop. I'm so shocked I just stand there and don't know what to do. My first thought is to find Hermione

but I don't know where she is so I go back to the common room and wait for her.

It turns out that Harry found Malfoy in one of the bathrooms on the seventh floor (with Moaning Myrtle - so that's why we never see her anymore!), and that Malfoy was actually *crying* and when he saw Harry in the doorway he went nuts and started trying to curse Harry with his wand. And he actually tried to use the Cruciatus curse on Harry, but Harry says he didn't have time to think, he just said the first spell that came into his head which was this one he'd found in the margins of his Half Blood Prince book, that he hadn't tried before, and that as soon as he said it, these wounds started opening up all over Malfoy's face and body and that within seconds he was covered in blood and lying on the floor and Harry thought he'd killed him. And Myrtle screamed and the first person who heard it and came running was Snape, and he managed to save him. Malfoy's going to be alright apparently - I hate him, but I don't actually want him to *die*, especially before I can beat the crap out of him myself. And anyway, if he'd actually died, Harry would really have been in trouble. As it is he's lucky not to be expelled. He's got detention for the rest of his life, basically. Which means - oh joy! - that he won't be able to play in the match on Saturday. Fantastic. Any sympathy I might have had for Malfoy, which was let's face it, not much to begin with, totally evaporated when I heard that.

To be honest, I know Harry was trying to defend himself, and alright, Malfoy shouldn't have used the Cruciatus curse, but I can't believe he got himself banned for the last match of the season! I've been finding it really hard to be sympathetic this evening. Hermione isn't even trying. She's never been a fan of that book and you know what she's like when she's right about something, she's impossible. The rest of the team are furious, of course. Ginny's going to have to play Seeker, which means Dean is back on the team in her Chaser position. If we win now it'll be a bloody miracle. Ginny and Hermione had a bit of a run-in about it in the common room this evening actually. I've never seen them argue before, but Hermione was telling Harry off again, and Ginny just snapped at her to shut up and said that it sounded like Malfoy was trying to use an Unforgivable curse on Harry, and we should all be grateful he had something up his sleeve. Hermione looked offended and said of course she was glad Harry was alright, but really Ginny ought to be on *her* side considering what it had done to our chances in the match, and Ginny snapped back, and I quote, "Oh, don't start pretending you know anything about Quidditch! You'll only embarrass yourself!" They glared at each other for ages. It was a bit scary actually! I just sank as low in my chair as possible and tried not to get involved. I'm not so much of an idiot that I'd

get in the middle of an argument between my sister and my, oh my God, nearly wrote *girlfriend* there, and am freaking out a bit!

I suppose now at least if we lose they might blame Harry rather than me as usual. I'm still a bit pissed off with him, although I know it's not really his fault. If Malfoy tried anything like that on me I'd probably have done the same. Must have been scary. I think poor Harry is a bit stunned by the whole thing. I'm more freaked out about the fact that we nearly got caught.

May 11th

The match is tomorrow. Since Harry's little run-in with Malfoy on Wednesday, I've had no time to see Hermione at all. There's been loads of extra Quidditch practice because of the last minute line-up change, plus I really have started being sick again, plus Hermione is worried by how close we were to getting caught and is starting to hint we should stop seeing each other for a bit. We haven't really talked about it. I don't want to bring it up, to be honest. I know if it comes down to it, she'll win the argument. I'm going with the tried and tested Ron method of not doing anything and hoping it all goes away of its own accord. Yeah, 'cos that worked so well with Lavender, didn't it?!

May 14th

Three days later: Yeah, yeah, leave it out, I've been busy! Because... (drum roll please).... WE WON! 450 to 140! I am some kind of God of Goalkeeping! Alright, maybe not a God exactly, maybe a minor King, ha ha! Anyway, I didn't suck, and we didn't lose, and nobody threw stuff at me, so HURRAY! This has been the best two weeks ever ever ever! Tons of stuff to write about, I'll try and get through it roughly in the order it all happened so I don't confuse myself. Let's face it, it doesn't take much...

So, Saturday, where between throwing up and having to go down to the pitch I manage to get away for five minutes to see Hermione in the bathroom - which is handy, obviously, if I plan on throwing up again. Anyway, I'm waiting for her when she comes in and tell her I haven't got much time because everyone in Gryffindor will be looking for me otherwise, assuming I've done a runner or deliberately stabbed myself in the hand or something. There is some kissing - I forget to tell her I've just been sick, sorry, Hermione - and she wishes me luck and says, "But you won't need it." I think, I hope not, but I feel like I could save anything because it's for her. I'm also sort of hoping that maybe if we win everyone will be so happy she won't mind if we tell Harry. I have this plan in the back of my head,

anyway. It won't kill me if it doesn't happen, but it would be nice not to have to hide in toilets.

Anyway, then there's the match, in which as you know, we absolutely slaughter 'em, hurray! (I'll do a proper match report later, but I've got much more important stuff to report right now, sorry!) Hermione gives me a big hug the second I get off my broom and I almost kiss her in front of everyone but somehow manage to restrain myself, I don't know how, and then the entire House all go back to the common room for a big party. Harry still doesn't know we won, of course, because he's stuck in detention for nearly killing Malfoy. I am really looking forward to seeing his face when he finds out, but I never get the chance. I'm showing the cup to some third year girls who all want to take turns to hold it when I see him come in, and I rush over and yell, "Harry! We won! WE WON!" Only he's not looking at me and he's certainly not listening, because someone else has just rushed over to tell him the good news as well and the next thing you know, he's *snogging Ginny!* Suddenly the room goes dead quiet. There are some cheers and whistles. After what seems like quite a long time to be kissing my sister he eventually looks round, sees me standing there still holding the cup like a lemon, and gives me this look that clearly says, "Is it alright or are you going to kill me?" I think I may have nodded, I can't really remember. I hardly have time to even decide what I think about this though, because two seconds later they've both left the room together. The third year girls all giggle and look a bit scared, as though I might go mental and throw things.

Hermione comes over and asks if I'm alright. I say, "Did you know about this?" She says she suspected it. She says, "Of course, boys are very transparent!" and laughs. I make a half-hearted protest but can hardly disagree under the circumstances. It's a bit weird, but funny enough I don't really mind. Ginny could do a lot worse. She *has* done a lot worse. I'd rather it was Harry than say, Seamus, or Dean, or almost any of those little ferrets in her year, I don't trust them as far as I can throw them. Anyway, it takes a lot to get me riled lately. I just let it all wash over me. And if anything does piss me off, I just think about *her* instead and that seems to do the trick. Actually thinking about it, maybe if Harry and Ginny are going to be all lovey-dovey, they might not be too horrified about me and Hermione. Maybe they'll be going on loads of long walks in the grounds and I'll actually get some time with her to myself. So, cheers Harry!

We manage to escape from the celebrations later on, hoping nobody will notice if we slip away for five minutes, although frankly I don't like leaving the lovely big shiny cup behind. I am slightly drunk because someone has

spiked the pumpkin punch with Firewhiskey. It tastes bloody horrible, but no-one's complaining. Well, Hermione is. She gives me one her disapproving looks and asks, "Are you *drunk*?" and I say sheepishly, "A bit." She goes "Tch!" but she doesn't say anything else, and she obviously doesn't go and tell McGonagall or pour the punch away or anything. She probably would have done it last year. Must be my bad influence! Hurray! Anyway, later on I sidle up to her and ask if she wants to go to the library. She laughs and says, "Do you mean, do I need to take a book back?" I nod, and accidentally bang the back of my head on the wall. Like I say, I am a bit drunk. She laughs and says, "Alright" and disappears out of the portrait hole. I follow her almost immediately but because I am, as I think we've definitely established, a bit drunk, and possibly slightly concussed, I take about a hundred years to get there and have to stop at one point to go to the loo and dunk my head under the cold tap. When I get there she says, "What took you?" I say "Bit drunk." I seem to have lost the power of words! Fortunately she isn't drunk and she hasn't lost the power of words because she presses me against the sink and puts her arms around my neck and says, "You were brilliant today" I say, "*I know!*" and laugh. And she kisses me on the mouth and whispers, "*Weasley, you're my king...*" I can't tell you what this makes me feel like. Pretty good! Brilliant. Fantastic. Like my chest might explode. Like that time I thought I'd taken lucky potion and everything seemed to go perfectly. Like we've just won the Quidditch cup. Like the first time she kissed me. Like all of that, rolled into one. Fuck it, I love her. I do. Bloody hell. I've gone all daft and I don't even care!

And then yesterday, I felt really rubbish all day but also really happy at the same time. I think maybe that's what a hangover feels like! We went up to the Owlery so I could send a gloating letter to Fred and George and ended up staying up there a while because there was no-one else around and we don't get those opportunities very often. At least we were sort of outdoors, although the smell from the owls was *appalling*. I said, "I don't think I've ever actually kissed you in daylight before" and she laughed and reminded me that we were supposed to be keeping this a secret and had I considered that my hair made me instantly recognisable from about a mile away. I said, "Remind me, why can't we tell them again? Harry and Ginny are going out, why would they mind if we are?" She said, "It's better if it's a secret. And Harry's got enough to worry about as it is. And... well... it's too soon after Lavender... people will think I'm the reason you split up." I said, "Well, you *are...*" and she went red and was obviously struggling not to smile, and said, "Yes, but I don't necessarily want the *entire school* to know that." I said, "Fine, I don't mind keeping it a secret. As long as we can keep doing *this*." Then there was, ahem, some more kissing. Quite a lot more. Oh, several days worth! Heh heh heh...

So, that brings us nicely up to today. We are at lunch in the hall, and she's sitting next to me and I'm deliberately bumping her leg under the table. We're whispering because everyone we know is sitting three feet away. She says, trying not to look at me and clearly trying not to laugh, "Stop it!" I say, innocently, "Stop what?" She says, "Stop making me laugh." Unfortunately I can't reply because I've just put three whole jam tarts in my mouth at once. She looks disgusted. She says, "You are a pig, Ronald." I say, "Mmmphh mmmphh". She shakes her head. I swallow the jam tarts as quickly as I can and grin at her and say under my breath, "Yeah, but I'm your pig..." She laughs. She says aloud, "I've just got to take this book back to the library", and she gets up from the table and leaves the hall. I wait three of the longest minutes in the world watching the clock

tick round and then pelt up the stairs to Myrtle's bathroom as fast as I can. I barely get in the door before she throws herself at me. There is much kissing! I can't persuade her to bunk off her next lesson and stay up there with me - although God knows I try - but she does agree to meet me there again this evening after lessons have finished. She's getting worried that people will notice. That Harry will notice. I reckon he's too busy going on nice long *walks* with Ginny to notice anything, but she's getting cold feet. She keeps going on about the bloody map. She's hinting that we should stop for a bit. God, this has been the best two weeks of my *life*, I'm not ready for it to stop again so soon!

May 15th

We had a row. Two, actually. Wonderful. We are in the bathroom first thing this morning and she's trying to tell me we shouldn't go there anymore. She says, "What about the map?" I say, trying to pretend I don't understand in the pathetic hope the whole thing will go away, "What map?" She almost shouts, "The map! Harry's map!" I say, stupidly, "Oh, *that* map." She says, "I think this is a bad idea." I say, "Harry won't notice. He never notices anything." She says, "He will if he's looking for Malfoy on the map and sees us in Myrtle's bathroom five times a day. Boys are stupid, but they're not that stupid." I say, "Oh, thanks!" She says, "I'm being serious, this isn't good. I think we should stop for a bit. It's only a few weeks -" My stomach just about drops through the floor. I say, incredulously, "WHAT?" She says, "I just think... maybe we should wait until term's over... I've been thinking about it since that business with Malfoy last week."

And she explains how what with everything going on, people being murdered, Harry going on all these dangerous missions with Dumbledore,

whatever it is that Malfoy's up to, we should both be there to support Harry and not just think about ourselves. She says it's selfish when there's all this going on. I think, I don't care if it's selfish. I've waited years for this. Harry can go to hell. Then I feel bad about thinking it. Then I think, no, I still don't care. She says, "It's only seven weeks!" I am stunned. I think I might actually die. *Seven weeks!* I say, "You are joking, aren't you? Please tell me this is some sort of not very funny joke." She ignores me and says, "I think if we can just wait 'til the end of term, it would be alright. If we could just get through these last few weeks, then it'll be the summer holidays and we don't have to think about all this anymore. We can look forward to going to Paris." I say, pathetically, "Yeah, but-" She says, "It's only seven weeks. That's not so bad." I say, "That's what you think." She says, "Do you mind?" I say "Oh, yeah, I'm delighted. Why don't you just kill me?" She frowns. She says, "Please don't get upset about this, it's for the best -" I say, "No, it isn't. It's your worst idea ever. I'm not doing it." She puts her hand on my arm and says, "Ron..." and I shout, "Oh, forget it! Why should I care anyway? Do what you want!" and I walk out and leave her there. I feel horrible about it for the rest of the morning.

Later on we have a conversation in the middle of the corridor where we're basically shouting in whispers. She's trying to get me to see her point of view. I'm trying to persuade her to change her mind. At one point I snap and say, "I'm just going to bloody tell him!" She says, "You wouldn't!" I say, "Yes, I would!" She says, "Even though I asked you not to?" I say, "Well... er..." She looks unhappy. She says, "I would be really upset if you told him." I say, "Alright! I won't tell him! Stop looking at me like that!" She says, "Thank you." I say, "I'll just steal the bloody map instead." She says, "He'll notice it's missing." She has an answer for everything. My mum used to say that about me when I was a kid. I'm not going to win this one, am I? AARGHH!!!

May 16th

When Harry was out of the room today I "borrowed" the map for ten minutes, legged it down to the bathroom and actually checked to see how easy it would be to find myself on it. I was convinced it would be almost impossible, and then I could tell her "See? You're worrying about nothing!", but to be honest, the bathroom's in a not very busy corridor, so there aren't a lot of other names in that part of the map to obscure ours. Plus I've never really properly looked at the map before and I started to see why Harry finds it so addictive. You start looking to see where everybody is, and because all the little dots keep moving, everything keeps changing. You can follow people around the castle. Look, there's Hermione, in the library.

And there I am, in the girls' bathroom. That's pretty suspicious for a start. He'll think I'm having an affair with Moaning Myrtle. And there's Seamus, and Parvati, and Neville, and McGonagall and Filch and, oh, everyone. If I had this map I'd sure as hell notice my two best friends standing a bit too close together in a girls' toilet. Fuck it.

May 19th

She hasn't had to take a book back to the library for three whole days. I keep checking: "Are you sure you haven't got to take a book back to the library? What about this evening?" and she keeps point blank refusing: "No, I'm quite sure I haven't." I have been bouncing off the walls! I'll probably explode if I can't kiss her again 'til freaking July.

May 20th

Harry's fucking map is going to be the death of me, I swear. I went into his trunk to borrow it again this morning so I could meet Hermione, and it wasn't there. I asked him about it later - "Still stalking Malfoy, then?" - and it turns out he's taken to carrying the bloody map around with him wherever he goes and checking it at random to try and catch Malfoy out. So, basically, I'm stuffed. Three days has been killing me, I've no idea what I'll do if I can't see her for seven bloody weeks. All because Harry's got some nutso obsession with Draco sodding Malfoy! I had a really hard time being polite to him today. I know it's not his fault, but the idea of nearly two months without her is unbearable. I waited long enough for this, I'm not giving her up now, not for anyone. I really don't understand why we can't just tell him. I'm sure he wouldn't mind. Why would he?

May 24th

Hermione is practical, I'll give her that. She worked out that there are times we'll know he's not looking at the map, and one of those is when he's asleep. So we're both now getting up an hour earlier every morning and meeting at Myrtle's for half an hour, then I have to go back to the dorm, get back into bed and pretend I've been there all along. It's absolutely killing me. Yesterday I nearly fell asleep at breakfast and half the morning had gone before I realised I was actually still wearing my pyjama trousers under my school uniform. Plus to be honest it's quite hard to get the energy up for snogging at quarter past six in the morning. You wouldn't think it would be a problem, would you? I'm telling you, you need to work it up to it. You definitely need to be awake. We've been doing it for four days now and I think we need a new plan. I need my bloody sleep! My only idea was

to tell Harry I want to help him on his Malfoy-hunting quest so I can borrow the map a few times. It's not the greatest idea in the world, and besides, if Malfoy really is up to something and I'm too busy snogging Hermione to notice, I don't think Harry would ever forgive me.

May 25th

I am a bloody genius, I tell you! I remembered that last year when we were having DA meetings we all had those coins that Hermione had enchanted, and the writing would change on them and tell you the time of the next meeting. So - hell, you're probably ahead of me already - we've both now got a silver Sickle each and during the day when Harry goes off on one of his long walks in the grounds with Ginny, I can press it, and it should get hot and change colour, and hopefully she'll get the message and we can meet in the bathroom, or the common room if it's late at night. The common room is a way better place to meet than the girls' bathroom. Apart from anything else, there are sofas! Did I not say I was a genius?! Although of course, it does mean I'm still not getting enough sleep, ha ha!

May 26th

Fred and George sent me and Ginny fifteen Galleons each for winning the Quidditch cup with a note to "spend it unwisely!" Brilliant! I know I complain about them sometimes, but fifteen Galleons! They must be raking it in. I don't think I've ever seen that much money, let alone had it all to myself before. I was thinking about next time we go into Hogsmeade maybe taking Hermione out for lunch at Madame Puddifoots or something, but of course all our Hogsmeade visits are still cancelled, so I don't know when I'm going to get the chance now. Maybe at the start of the holidays we could go to Diagon Alley and I could buy her something nice. I'd like that. Anyway, it's either that or just spend it all on chocolate like I usually do. I know Fred and George said to spend it unwisely but that's ridiculous. No, I'd really like to take her out to lunch. Well, dinner, but I don't think fifteen Galleons would stretch that far. It's a shame we can't go into Hogsmeade, though, 'cos it's really burning a hole in my pocket. Fifteen galleons! I think that's more than I'm actually worth! You know, if you sold me in a shop or something. I'm not exactly a hard worker. I'm pretty lazy. I'm not very tidy. I don't clean. You might actually be lucky to get ten for me. Five?! Come on, I'm worth more than that! I can cook a little bit. I make a mean shepherd's pie. I'm not bad on a broom. I can reach things down from high shelves. I'm a great snog. Oh, alright, three Galleons, six sickles and a chocolate frog, and that's my final offer!

May 27th

Bumped into Ginny in the hall this afternoon. I haven't really spoken to her since the match - we've obviously both been a bit busy! - so it was a bit awkward at first. We talked about what we were going to do with Fred & George's money - obviously I didn't tell her what I really plan to do with it, I just said I'd buy something cool next time I was in Diagon Alley. And then she asked if I was really alright with her going out with Harry, and I said I'd got used to the idea now, and anyway, better Harry than Michael Corner or Dean. She said she hadn't seen me in such a good mood for ages. I said, "Yeah, I wish I'd got up the nerve and dumped Lavender months ago. Now it's all over I can't believe I let it drag on so long." She said she can't believe I did either. She said, "Will you promise me something?" "What?" "Next time, can you just pick someone *better*?" I laughed and told her, "Don't worry, I will!"

She didn't ask about Hermione, which I was glad about, because I know what a terrible liar I am. If she'd asked me outright, I know I'd have gone beetroot and said something really unconvincing like "What? What do you mean? Nothing's going on!" and she'd have known *instantly* that something most definitely *is* going on. That's women for you, they know everything. I don't know how, but they do. It's like they're mind-readers or something. Ginny's got her exams coming up, though, so hopefully that's been distracting her and she won't have noticed anything. That and spending all the time she's not revising wrapped around Harry. Urgh! I suppose I can't really complain. At least I do my snogging in private, although that's not for want of trying, I can tell you. Anyway, she seems to be doing alright, just a bit frazzled about the exams. I remember what I was like last year. I was sure I was going to fail everything. Mind you, Ginny's smarter than me, so she shouldn't have so much to worry about. She'll breeze through them, I bet. It's sickening! Hermione's been having a go at Harry about distracting Ginny when she's supposed to be revising. I keep reminding her that if Harry's not distracting Ginny, he'll be distracting *us* instead, and we'll hardly get any chances to see each other anymore, at least during the day. Sod Ginny's future, what about my sex life?!

I should probably point out for the record there's not been any of *that*, in case you're wondering. Bloody hell, I'm not that fast! Although I am getting, ah, a little bit faster these days, mainly thanks to whoever it was invented the sofa. You know what, I never really appreciated before what a wonderful invention sofas are. Snogging in the bathroom was pretty damn good, but snogging on a sofa - in the middle of the night, especially - is a whole new level of fantasticness. Is that a word? It's the fact that you're

sitting down and once you're sitting down you're already halfway to lying down, and well, that's a whole different kettle of fish. If a kettle of fish can be compared to the joy that is horizontal snogging, which I'm not sure it can. God, my brain's really not working today. Hey, I'm not getting enough sleep, I've got more of an excuse than usual for getting my words all wrong! That's another advantage of sofas, if I wanted a bit of a kip, I could. Although funnily enough, I've not really been inclined to so far. Snogging beats sleeping hands down and I really like my sleep, so you can take my word for it. Actually, I tell a lie, the other night I nearly did doze off. It was because it was later than usual - about three o'clock, I think - and we were sitting in front of the fire, and watching a fire really makes you sleepy. Either that or she'd just wore me out!

May 28th

OK, so tonight - world's best ever kiss, and I'll take on all comers for that title! You want details? Shame on you! Oh, go on then, you've twisted my arm. So, we are standing outside the hall, where everyone's having dinner. She's just got there because she went to the library, and I've finished in record time as usual and have left early because I wondered where she was, and we bumped into each other outside. We say hello, then I hold out my hand and say "Come here." She says, "Don't be stupid, the entire school's on the other side of that door." I say, "Exactly!" She says, "Do you remember when we agreed this was going to be a secret?", but she's smiling when she says it and she doesn't stop me when I kiss her!!! It's like a game of chicken: how long can we keep this up until the door opens and everyone sees us? About three minutes is the answer, and to be honest, it's only really her playing the game because I actually secretly want the door to open so everyone will know and I can kiss her all over the school and not just in the girls' toilets. But those three minutes until she cracks and pulls away are like some sort of Quidditch World Cup Final of snogging; I'm Bulgaria and she's Ireland, and we are just the best in the world, there's no contest! I almost expect cheering and applause. Thank you! You're too kind! Thank you all!

May 29th

I don't why, I keep getting this mad urge to confess things to her. Some nice things, some, well, not so nice! I feel like all those things I wanted to say to her before and never did are suddenly queuing up to be said. Sometimes it's all I can do not to just blurt it all out at once. I think that might be a mistake, to say the least. I'd be really embarrassed to say some of it to her and I'm sure she'd be really embarrassed to hear it. But all this

stuff's on the tip of my tongue and if I'm not careful, I'm just going to bloody say it! "Hermione, did you know you're completely wonderful? Oh yeah, and you have very sexy knees!"

May 30th

May 30th today. It's, um, our one month anniversary. Yeah, I know I majorly took the piss out of Lavender when she kept banging on about it, but she was already driving me bananas by then, so it was hardly worth celebrating. And come on, a month is pretty impressive when you think about it. I've managed not to fuck it up for four whole weeks! That's not bad for me, is it? I was counting the days in April because it was part of my big plan, so that's why I remembered the date. It's not because I've suddenly turned into a soppy git or anything. It's *not!* Oh, shut up! I don't think I'm gonna mention it to Hermione, though. She'll probably just think it's silly. Of course, if she brings it up, I obviously won't pretend I forgot. I'm not *that* stupid. Although I am stupid enough to be still up here writing this when they've been serving breakfast for ten minutes already.

So, what was the *very first thing* I said to her this morning, on the way into breakfast a mere *three minutes* after I wrote that? "*Do you know what day it is today?*" Christ, Weasley! Still, it was worth it later, because it turns out all women like it if you remember anniversaries, not just Lavender and my mum. Obviously with it being a secret we couldn't really make a night of it like I did with Lavender, but on the plus side, well, she's not Lavender! And I'm not covered in bloody glitter, and she didn't complain about me not making an effort to dress up for the occasion. The occasion being half an hour snogging in a toilet. It was half an hour of quality snogging, mind. Half an hour of well-done-Ron-you-remembered-our-anniversary snogging! And I did put a clean tshirt on. A *red* one. Haha! Alright, so I didn't actually notice it was inside out. But at least it was clean!

JUNE

June 1st

June, June, lovely June! Jesus, can you believe that six months ago I'd just started going out with Lavender and was all stupid and happy about it? It seems like a million years ago now. I don't know what I was thinking. Well, I wasn't thinking, obviously. I should have said something to Hermione before, then maybe that crappy three months where we weren't talking to each other might never have happened. Been kind of a weird year this year. Weird that I'm sort of going out with her after all this time. Even though we don't actually go *out*, as in *outside*. I feel like a vampire! It's particularly frustrating 'cos it's nice and sunny out there at the moment, and I really want to go outside with her but she reckons it's too risky, people might see us. I told her, "We'd only be going for a walk, it's not like we'd be doing anything", but she just raised her eyebrows in a way that clearly translated as, "Hmm, yes, I really believe you!" And alright, she's not wrong on that one, but I'd be happy if I could at least just hold her hand or put my arm round her or give her a kiss. I mean, give me a break, is it too much to ask to be able to go for a nice walk in the sunshine with my girlfriend? Other people get to. Harry and Ginny get to. Oh well, only five more weeks and I'm outta here! Five more weeks and it's the summer holidays and I don't have to look at these bloody curtains 'til September, hurray! Five more weeks and we can finally tell people we're going out with each other, and I can kiss her in public and not have to hide in toilets! This is going to be the best summer ever. Six whole weeks of snogging! Outdoors! Not that this last month hasn't been fantastic, but Jesus I'm sick of the sight of that bathroom...

And *then* I'm going to Paris! With Hermione! With my *girlfriend*. That's in August, then when we come back it's final year, woo-hoo! I can't wait 'til we can all leave and go and get jobs and live in the real world. It'll be brilliant to finally have a bit of money and be able to buy things and go out to pubs and stuff. I sort of imagine us all living in London and working in the Ministry of Magic. Maybe we could even get a flat together! Oh my God, that would just be freaking *fantastic!* Her doing whatever she ends up doing and me and Harry doing our Auror training. It *might* happen! I'll have to do really well in my exams though, and I don't want to think about those just yet, thanks. It might seem like a long way off now, but I bet they'll come round quickly. Ruining my last year at school when I'd rather just be snogging Hermione. Once I've left school I'm never writing another essay, I tell you that much. I'm never writing another essay, I'm never reading another textbook, I'm never taking another test, and I'm never wearing a

bloody tie again either! Something else I'd like to do before I leave school: get Snape back for all the times he had a go at me in front of the class and all the detentions he made me do and all the millions of hours of misery I had to sit through in his sodding lessons. Obviously I'll wait until I've got my exam results first! And I'm going to punch Draco Malfoy in the face. On the last day of term. Yeah, I should make that the last thing I ever do at Hogwarts. Punch Malfoy, sweep Hermione off her feet with a huge kiss, stick two fingers up at everyone watching, and ride off into the sunset on my broomstick!

I *will* get him, though. One day, when I can't be expelled any more, when he can't do anything about it, when he hasn't got his big hard stupid mates with him. One day. No wands either, none of that, just what McGonagall calls "Muggle duelling" - fists and feet and knees and elbows. I'll have to make sure Hermione's not around either, 'cos I suspect that might be a dumping offence. Not that she doesn't hate him, just that I think she'd consider I'd let her down somehow. She'd think I should be able to rise above it. She probably wouldn't appreciate that I'd be half doing it for her anyway. Whack! That one's for me! Whack! That one's for her! Whack! That one's for Harry! Whack! That one's for calling my family a bunch of blood traitors! Whack! That one's for saying's my mum's fat! Whack! That one's for calling my dad a loser! Whack! That one's for getting Fred and George banned from playing Quidditch! Whack! That one's for the time you tried to get Hagrid sacked! Whack! That one's for taking the piss out of my clothes for seven years! See this second-hand shoe? See your nose? Shall we introduce them? Crunch! And while we're at it, *this* one's for inventing that bastard song! *Who's* your King, Malfoy? Come on, I want to hear you say it, I don't care if you have swallowed your teeth! Whack! These next *fourteen* are for every time you called her a Mudblood, you nasty little git! I should make a list of all the times I wanted to hurt him and didn't, so when it comes to it, I know exactly how many punches I owe him. It's got to be in the hundreds...

Ha, does it sound like I've spent the last six years bruising my knuckles on other people's faces? Honestly, I haven't actually hit anyone at all apart from Malfoy that time in first year. Shoving Seamus against a wall last year was the closest I've got since then. Oh, and of course I *did* punch Harry but since I'd just swallowed Romilda Vane's love potion at the time and had no idea what I was doing, I don't think I can be blamed for that one. I'd like to have punched Krum though. And McLaggen. I used to fantasise about smashing Krum's teeth in with his own broomstick. I think that might be the other reason I wanted to get on the team so much, actually. Mostly it was to impress a girl, of course. *The* girl. But the chance of pulverising Krum

would definitely have run it a close second. And actually since that was all about the girl as well... Mind you, they're both older and bigger than me, and built like broomsheds, so starting a fight with either of them might not be the best idea ever. Anyway, if I was going to do it, I should have done it ages ago. There's not much point now, is there? I'd sort of like to see him again though, just once, so I can enjoy a good gloat. "Look, you dimwitted Bulgarian *git*, she's going out with *me* now, not you anymore, you *lose*, HA!" I wouldn't say it in front of her, obviously. I'd find a nice dark corner somewhere just so if I did feel the need to smack him, nobody would see. See him beat the crap out of me, probably! I should just leave it, shouldn't I? Rise above it, like she would. But Malfoy's a different matter entirely. Whatever she says, he's getting a kicking. Who's your King, Malfoy? Oh, it's going to be such sweet revenge!

June 2nd

Interesting conversation with Harry tonight. The three of us are sitting in the common room and Hermione goes off to bed, and then he says, "So, you two seem to be getting on a bit better lately." I try to keep my voice as neutral as possible. I say, "Yeah, s'pose so." He says, "Unless you're secretly having arguments behind my back." I laugh much too loudly and say, very firmly, "No." If only he knew! He says, "Sorry I haven't been around much lately." I say, "That's alright, you've got a better offer, it's fine. I'm sure I was a lot worse than you when I was going out with - no, still can't bring myself to say her name!" We both laugh and he says, "Yeah, you were a total pain in the arse." I say, "Well, it's your turn now." He says, jokingly, "Shut up!" and then, "You should get yourself a girlfriend, then you'd be too busy to notice." I say, "Nah, it took me long enough to get rid of Lavender. I'm quite happy to be young, free and single, thanks very much." He sighs loudly. I say, "What was that for?" He says, "Never mind. So there's *no-one* you fancy, then?" I tell him, "Nope!" as breezily as I can manage. He says, "Right" and then, "I don't believe you." I say, "Fine." We glare at each other. After about three seconds he starts grinning and I start to crack as well. I say, "Oh, shut up, Harry," but I can't keep the stupid smile off my face. I think she's right, he probably does know I like her. But I promised her I wouldn't tell him, even though this would be a pretty perfect opportunity, so I just deny everything for the time being, and he doesn't bring it up again.

That's what I like about Harry, he doesn't push it. He'd rather not get involved. The whole time I was going out with Lavender and Hermione wasn't speaking to me and I was probably being a wanker quite a lot of the time, he only cracked and told me to sort myself out about twice. As

opposed to Ginny, who was on my bloody back every other day. Mind you, I probably deserved it. I'm sure Hermione would say I *definitely* deserved it. But Harry likes to keep himself to himself a lot of the time, and he doesn't really want to know what you're up to either. He never really talked to me about it when he fancied Cho Chang, and obviously he never talked to me about fancying Ginny, but I'm quite glad about that one. Ironic really how I spent the whole of April trying to get her on her own without Harry around, and now he's going out with Ginny, we hardly ever see him, especially at weekends. It's good though, because now I get to spend all my time with her, with a perfect excuse. She says we should be more careful, but I don't reckon he'll notice anything. He'll just be thinking about snogging 24 hours a day! I didn't really notice he was even more distant and moody than usual all the way through March and April, for exactly the same reason. Him: distant and moody. Me: childish and annoying. Her: gorgeous and smart and sexy and wonderful and oh, stop me before I embarrass myself... Too late, you reckon? Sod you, I don't care! Anyway, I still don't think he'd mind if we told him. She's right that he's got enough to worry about, but then knowing him he'd find something to worry about even if there wasn't anything. That's probably why she doesn't want us to tell him yet. But honestly, I think it'll be fine. Anyway, according to her I was the least subtle person in the world about it, so I'll probably tell him, and he'll go, "Yeah, Ron, big surprise!" Not exactly sure how I'd phrase that one. "Er, Harry, you know you asked me if there was anyone I fancied, and I said no...? Well, um... that wasn't strictly true..." Maybe I should just do what he did with Ginny and kiss Hermione in the middle of the common room in front of everyone. Otherwise it'll just be me telling him I kissed her, and him saying, "Oh, right, when was this?" and me saying, "Er, April. And every day since!"

I still can't believe it's been a whole month. I keep waiting for everything to go pear-shaped, but the longer it goes on the more confident I get that everything's actually going to be alright, she's not suddenly going to come to her senses and dump me. It might only have been four weeks but it's going really fast. Maybe that's because we haven't got to do all that "What's your favourite colour?" "Oh, me too!" crap I had to do with Lavender. We don't have to get to know each other first, because we already do, and we aren't suddenly finding out little irritating things about each other like I did with Lavender and I'm sure she did with me, because again, we already know. She knows I'm a lazy idiot. I know she's a bossy know-it-all. I just don't care! Well, I do, obviously, but the point is, that's her. She's got a million other good points so they cancel that stuff out. I'm not sure how it works the other way around. I suspect my bad points probably outnumber my good points, but she doesn't mind that because obviously

I'm such a fantastic snog! Yeah, that'll be it. Definitely! She told me today she's been waiting for me to ask her out for about two years. *Two years!* I said I wish she'd told me sooner and she said, I wish *you'd* told *me*, and then we both stood there in silence probably thinking what a pair of muppets we are. I know I was. That's probably why it seems to be going quite fast, I reckon, because we've been thinking about it for ages and maybe in our heads we're already ahead of where we actually are. Well, I am anyway. I don't know about her. I'm told girls do think about that stuff, even *nice* girls.

And actually it turns out Hermione's not such a nice girl as I thought! I don't mean in a bad way. Just that, um, how can I put this? It's not that I'm trying it on or anything. Really, I'm not. I'm just pathetically grateful for everything at the moment, so I don't want to mess it up. But Hermione never has any objections. If anything, she's even more enthusiastic than I am. Hey, I'm as surprised as you are! Actually, she's full of surprises. I like that people who don't know her think she's just this boring serious girl who's only interested in books, and I get to see all the bits of her that are anything but boring and serious. And she's interested in loads of things that are a *lot* more fun than studying, I can tell you.

She says I'm full of surprises too. She says, who knew, when I took almost the whole of April to work up to kissing her, that I'd turn out to be such a touchy-feely sort of bloke? I'm not exactly sure what "touchy-feely" means, but my guess is it means I can't keep my hands off her! Which is certainly true, ha ha. Hey, that's what my hands are *for!* What was all that Quidditch about if not getting my Goalkeeper's hands in peak physical condition, limbering them up for the main event?!? I think she might be coming round to my point of view about telling people, actually. She's definitely been taking a lot more risks in public lately. Like last night in the common room when she was rubbing her toes up my shins under the table and Harry was sitting *right there*. Harry: "What do you think, Ron?" Me, reduced to a gibbering idiot, absolutely no idea what he's talking about: "Er... er... er... yes." Harry, impatiently: "Yes, *what?*" Me: "Yes, whatever it was that you said?" Her, with an impressively straight face: "Oh, for Heaven's sake, Ron, pay attention!"

She never used to be like this. All flirty and silly and stuff. Or was she always like it and I was just too dense to notice? No, I'm sure this is new. Not that I didn't like *old* Hermione, obviously, but *new* Hermione... bloody hell! It's a bit like when the new Nimbus or Firebolt comes out and it's basically the same broom but it's just faster and better. Which works,

actually. New Hermione is faster and better! I might tell her that later. So if you see me around with a black eye...

I mean, really, how the *hell* am I supposed to concentrate on anything when all this is happening? It doesn't help when she sits next to me in all my lessons and she presses her leg against mine under the table. Or her school skirt rides up a couple of inches over her knees and I'm the only person who can see it. I thank God every day (well, maybe God's not the one responsible!) that our school uniform includes skirts rather than trousers for girls! Sometimes we'll just be sitting there next to each other with our legs and arms touching, and we're not really doing anything, but no-one knows we're doing it on purpose, so it's still like this fantastic secret no-one else knows about. And I like it when we kick each other under the desk, especially at mealtimes if she's sitting opposite me, because the table's quite wide, and I can always reach her feet with mine but she can't always stretch that far, and it drives her *nuts*. Sometimes we probably forget where we are, and that there are other people around, and that it's supposed to be a secret. Little things like me pulling a stray bit of thread off her skirt, or her pressing her hand on my knee to stop me drumming my foot on the floor. There's no way we'd have done that before. I'd just have *told* her there was something on her skirt, and she'd probably have snapped at me to stop fidgeting. I'm sure if Harry wasn't so distracted lately, it might be a bit of a giveaway!

The thing is, as far as I'm concerned, I just don't care if people find out. I'd be quite happy to tell them. Actually, I'd be quite happy to get some announcements printed! So taking that into consideration, you can see why I'm maybe not trying as hard as I should to be careful in public. It's not just me either. (Although it usually is!) Yesterday we were standing in the corridor talking to Neville, and she reached for my hand and then realised and pulled it back again. I caught Neville's eye and we both looked away quickly. Hard to tell who was more embarrassed, really! Neville's alright though, I don't think he'll say anything. Now if it had been Seamus...

Mind you, even I never risk doing any of that stuff in Snape's lessons. He's got eyes in the back of his head, plus he hates me as well, so I wouldn't put it past him to draw attention to it in front of the entire class. "Weasley! Are you actually going to do any work, or are you going to spend the entire lesson stroking Miss Granger's elbow?" "I'm going to spend the entire lesson stroking Miss Granger's elbow, sir. Is that a problem at all?" Oh, if only I actually dared say that to him!

Slughorn's lessons are a different matter entirely. I swear ever since he accidentally poisoned me, my Potions marks have improved no end. And since it's not very likely I've suddenly developed a genius for Potions, you've got to assume the stupid old git just feels guilty about it and is marking me up. Not that I'm complaining. He owes me one. I feel like I can almost get away with anything in Potions these days. I bet if he caught me actually setting fire to his moustache he'd just let me off with a caution. We could probably do it on his bloody desk and he'd just pretend not to see. We were playing footsie the other day in his lesson and I lost my shoe and had to go under the table to get it. And Seamus spotted me and said loudly, "While you're down there, Weasley..." which made me crack my head on the underside of the desk. So of course everyone laughed, and I told Seamus to shut his mouth and Slughorn had to tell us to settle down, please. I said, as loudly as possible so everyone would hear; "Lost my shoe, sir!", but I know I went bright red because I felt like my face was on fire, and I couldn't look at her at all for the rest of the lesson. Bloody Seamus. I can't wait to see the expression on his face next year when we tell him.

I suppose I should be grateful to Slughorn really. If I hadn't got poisoned, Hermione wouldn't have started speaking to me again, I might still be - *Jesus, no!* - going out with Lavender, and I certainly wouldn't be spending several hours a day snogging Hermione in the bathroom. Yeah, I should send him a thank you note. Maybe when I'm working and I get my first wage packet I can send him a bottle of Firewhiskey or something. "From Ron and Hermione. If it wasn't for you we wouldn't be together. PS: It's not poisoned, honest!" Actually, he probably won't even remember me. I'm still not sure he knows what my first name is. He probably thinks of me as "that ginger kid I nearly killed".

June 3rd

Hermione's mum sent me a present! Yeah, I know! I asked her why would her mum send me a present, and she got all embarrassed and said she wrote and told her mum "um, *you know...*" and she thinks she's probably just grateful because now she hasn't got to listen to Hermione complaining about me anymore. I said, "What, now you can complain about me to my face instead?" She said, "Do you want your present or not?" And she reached into her bag and pulled out this giant rectangular thing about two foot wide and half an inch thick that could only be a book. Me, incredulously: "Is it a book?" Her, even more incredulously: "Why would my mum buy you a *book*?" I said, "Maybe it's a big list of things I'm not allowed to do. Number one: don't kiss my daughter. Oh dear. Number two: keep

your filthy paws off my daughter. Oh dear, oh dear... Number three -" She said, "Are you going to open it or not?" Turned out - hooray! - it wasn't a book, it was a giant bar of chocolate! Some sort of Muggle chocolate in a purple wrapper. It was quite funny actually, I think Hermione was secretly horrified. She told me her mum's never even bought *her* chocolate. She said it's pretty ironic that her parents spent her entire childhood not allowing her to have sweet things because they're bad for her ("You don't need them, darling, you're sweet enough already!") and she ends up with me, the boy with the world's sweetest tooth. Who's obviously not *nearly* sweet enough already, ha ha!

Now I think about it, I can't believe she wrote and told her mum about it. I can't imagine ever having that kind of conversation with my dad. And surely she doesn't mean she told her *everything*? I know she gets on well with her mum, but Jesus, I'll never be able to look her in the face again! At least not without thinking, "I've had my hand up your daughter's top..." And worse, her *knowing* that. Actually, going out with me is probably the worst thing Hermione's ever done. I bet she's been the perfect daughter up 'til now. They must be *delighted* with me. "Where did we go wrong?" Ha ha! God, I really am going to find it hard to look them in the eye next time I see them. I'll have to be on my best behaviour, make sure I haven't spilt anything on myself, that kind of thing. I've never had to meet a girl's parents before, not like this. I suppose it's probably a bit too late now to try and make a good first impression!

ME: "Hello Mrs. Granger, nice to see you again, how are you?"

HER MUM: "Don't give me that, what was all that business with Lavender about, eh? Are you mental or something? What's *wrong* with you?"

ME: "Er..."

ME: (shaking hands with her dad) "Hello Mr. Granger, nice to see you again, how are you?"

HER DAD: "If you ever upset my daughter again I'll track you down and have you killed."

ME: "Great! Going on holiday this year at all?"

Still, I suppose if they trust me enough to let me take their only daughter to Paris... Well, *actually*, they can't trust me at all, should I tell them that, d'you think?!? I'm not sure they can trust *her* either. I've been thinking

about Paris a lot lately. When she asked me to go in the first place she must have known I'd spend the whole of the next four months thinking about it. I'm sure she does too, but she probably imagines us visiting the cathedral and drinking coffee and going to museums, and I'm afraid when I think about it I never get out of the hotel room. Well, no, that's not *entirely* true. I also think about finally getting to kiss her outdoors, in the sunshine, in front of a succession of famous tourist locations. But they're really just a backdrop to the snogging, I don't actually care what's in them! We have these conversations where we talk about all the things we might do when we're there, but we never talk about, ah, the *other* thing we might do. Funny how seven months ago I'd never done *anything*, never even kissed anyone, and now I'm thinking about hotel rooms in Paris. *Paris...* oh, those five lovely little letters, so much promise!

Actually, I was thinking about writing to Fleur and asking if she has friends or relatives we could maybe stay with instead. I've obviously got no objections to a hotel, but I don't really like the idea of her dad paying for everything. She says he doesn't mind, but I do. At least if we were staying with friends of Fleur's that would save money. And I think I'm going to brave the ribbing I'll no doubt get and ask Fred & George to lend me the rest of it when I see them. At least then I can pay my own way. Hopefully next year I'll be working and I can pay most of it back then. Or maybe I could work evenings or weekends in their shop and pay them back that way. It'll be worth it, though. Even if it takes me ten years. Even if it takes me the rest of my *life...*

June 4th

So we're in the common room last night at about two a.m. and I'm teasing her about what she wrote to her mum about me: "Did you tell her about all my crap attempts to kiss you in April?" "No!" "Good, because it's going to be embarrassing enough next time I see them without that. So what *did* you tell her?" "I just told her that we, you know, kissed." "Oh, God! And what did she say?" "She said, *"Finally!"*" I laugh my head off at that and she has to tell me to shush in case I wake people up. I say, "Your parents must be delighted. I bet they were hoping you'd meet some *nice* boy..." She says, "You *are* a nice boy!" I protest, "Sod off, I'm not!" She laughs. "What, is it not *cool* to be nice? Anyway, they already like you. In fact, my mum actually said to me once, "You won't get any complaints from us, he's a nice boy from a nice family." I can't decide whether to be pleased or offended about this. I can absolutely guarantee that nobody has ever said that about me before. Hang on... "When was this, then? That you were talking about it with your mum? And why would you get any *complaints*?"

She blushes, which is very cute. "I... can't remember. A couple of years ago, maybe. I was probably trying to talk myself out of it." "Out of what?" "Liking you." That makes me laugh. "Didn't work, then?" "No, unfortunately." "Oi!"

After that there is quite a lot of kissing, which gets horizontal (my new favourite word!) very quickly, and anything else is none of your bloody business! Not that we're, you know, *doing* anything. Just snogging and, um, stuff. Jesus, I've embarrassed myself now. Is it good or bad that I'm having to censor my own diary? Good that things are happening that need censoring, I suppose! It just doesn't seem right to write some things down, you know? It's a bit like, I never wrote about a lot of Harry-related stuff because if it got into the wrong hands, it could be dangerous. I probably shouldn't be writing about this at all. I'm sure if she knew I was writing it all down, she wouldn't be exactly delighted. Well, I'm not writing it *all* down. Some things should definitely just stay in your head! Actually, maybe I should just stop altogether. I think I said ages ago that this diary was all about her - no shit, Ron! - so if I'm not going to write about that stuff anymore then what's the point? Might as well just chuck it in. Either that or this is going to be a really boring read from now on! And anyway, it's too hot, and I'm too lazy, and I've just got better things to do. What things would those be, Ron? Ah, you know, *things*... Things that are a lot more fun than sitting up here writing this, I can tell you. In fact, I'm not sure I can even be bothered to finish this sent-

June 5th

I think I just upset her, but I don't know how. I don't know what I said. We were in the bathroom at lunchtime and I was just really really happy. Six years of unspoken compliments were sitting in my head. I told her, "You look particularly lovely today," because she did, but she went red and frowned and said, "I don't." I said, "Allow me to know!" She didn't look pleased, she just looked embarrassed and for some reason, unhappy. I'm not sure why a compliment should make her feel bad, but it obviously does. We stood there awkwardly not saying anything for what seemed like ages. I didn't know what to say in case I upset her again. I said, "You *do* look lovely, though" She said, "Stop it." I said, "What have I done?" She said, "Just leave it." I said, trying to be sympathetic, "Oh, is it your time of the month or something?" She practically exploded then. She shouted a lot of stuff at me which didn't really make any sense, and I let her, because clearly anything I might say was just going to make things worse. Then we had to go to lessons and we haven't mentioned it since. I don't know what I said wrong. I just thought, if I think something nice about her, I should tell

her, not just bottle it up like I used to. Apparently this was a crap idea. Surely she doesn't think I'm taking the piss? I don't know what to do about it if she does. If she doesn't believe me, I don't know what I can say to make her. How come I always manage to say the wrong thing, even when I'm trying to be nice?

June 6th

So I see her this morning in the dining hall and the first thing I say to her is, "Don't you have a library book to take back after breakfast?" She says, "Alright" but she doesn't sound very enthusiastic. When we get up there I start in straight away with, "About yesterday-" She says, "Ron, I'm really sorry. I don't know what's wrong with me. I'm just not used to it, that's all." I say, "Used to what?" She goes bright red and can't look at me. She says, "No-one's ever said I looked lovely before." I mentally kick myself for all those times I wanted to say it and never did. I am such a muppet. Then she says, "Well, apart from Vi-" and stops. I can feel my face burning up. Oh, Viktor said it, did he? Bully for Viktor. Good old Viktor. The image of what Hermione and Krum were up to two years ago, that caused all the problems in the first place, comes into my head. Not for the first time, unfortunately. I tell myself, say something nice, don't mention Viktor, don't even think about it. You're here now, aren't you? Stop being a prat. I say, "I thought it loads of times, if that helps." She says, "Did you?" She looks surprised. I really *am* a muppet. I should have said it. I tell her I should have said it. I say she looks lovely every day and I'm going to tell her she looks lovely every day. I am on a *roll!* She says, "Don't do that, I won't believe you, just save it for special occasions", but obviously my fantastic ability to always say the wrong thing must be on holiday today because she looks pleased, and then there is quite a lot of, um, *energetic* snogging.

Which is great and all, don't get me wrong, but it doesn't stop me spending the rest of the day worrying about how easy it would be for me to fuck this up. We used to have these stupid little rows about just random stuff and we always got over them, but everything's different now. I don't want it to all get out of hand like last time. Hermione hasn't said anything about the whole Lavender business and obviously I don't want to bring it up myself, because I know I'll just come off really badly. The thing is, I can just see this big argument looming up in the future, where she asks me why I was so angry with her in the first place and why I got off with Lavender, and I tell her, and she goes absolutely ballistic and dumps me. We can't go on forever never mentioning Lavender or Krum. Or McLaggen. Do I really want to know if she snogged him at the Christmas party? Honestly? Yeah, I sort of do. Even though I know I'd probably go majorly off the rails if it

turns out she did. Why does it even matter now, anyway? I don't know! I can't explain it. It just *does*. I think it will be alright as long as neither of us mentions the V or L words. Ever. There are some four-letter words even I don't want to hear and *Krum* is one of them. I don't want to fuck it up. Of course, I probably will. But I'm gonna try not to. Those three months when she wasn't speaking to me were the worst three months of my life, and this last month has been the best. And I *will* fuck it up if I ever mention Viktor sodding Krum in front of her again.

June 7th

Bloody hell, *last night!* We fell asleep on the sofa! I woke up this morning with a dead leg where she was lying on it and realised it was half six and we'd been there all night, and we'd better move otherwise someone might come down and find us there. Which would obviously not be a good idea! I suppose at least we were still in our day clothes, so no-one would think we were up to anything. Anyway, I woke her up and we've both just gone to bed. There's not much point in even trying to get any sleep since I'll only have to get up again in half an hour, so I just changed into my school uniform and I'm lying on my bed writing this. This is definitely one of those occasions I'm grateful for the curtains we have around our beds - no-one knows if your bed hasn't been slept in. That would be a bit of a giveaway, wouldn't it? Am *desperate* to tell someone about it, but can't of course. As soon as I got back here I really wanted to wake up Harry and tell him "Guess what I've been doing!" I can't wait until we can actually tell people we're seeing each other and stop sneaking around. Not that it's not fun. Jesus, fun doesn't even begin to describe this.

I have to pinch myself sometimes. Am I going to wake up and find out I've actually been unconscious in the hospital wing for three months and it's all been a dream? How the hell did this even happen? I must have done something really good in a previous life to deserve what this month's been like. I must have healed some lepers or something. Mind you, I'm not sure God works in that way. If he did, that evil little tosser Malfoy would never get any! Oh, wow, this is *fantastic*. I am a dirty stop-out! My hair is all sticking up on one side where I slept funny - half sitting up with her head on my shoulder. I could really do with a bath too. But I've got to admit, it was pretty fucking wonderful waking up with her there next to me. We didn't *do* anything, just snogging and sleeping, but hey, I'm not complaining! It was probably one of the best nights of my life! And if you ever do catch me complaining about it, you have my permission to whack me in the face with something large and heavy. Like Eloise Midgeon. HA

HA! Totally knackered now, though. And starving! And I've just realised that technically I've *slept* with Hermione! Woo-hoo!

Later:

Jesus, I've just been completely wrecked all day. We both kept yawning, which I'm sure would be a huge giveaway if Harry was actually paying attention. Oh, I've got to tell you, we had to change classrooms this afternoon because someone had broken a bottle of something that was giving off poisonous fumes, so the whole class trooped along the corridor and up some stairs to a different room. I was walking with Harry and Neville and noticed she was trailing behind at the back looking for something in her bag, so I slowed down to let everyone get past me. And then everyone in front turned the corner and there was about five seconds where they couldn't see us, although some first year kids behind us could. And I'm afraid - nah, I'm not, not *remotely* - I had a bit of a mad moment and kissed her in front of all the first years. Not a major snog or anything, just a really quick kiss on the mouth, and then I ran off and caught up with Harry and when I looked back she was just standing there looking a bit stunned, it was hilarious. And brilliant. When I saw her later she said, "Don't do that again!" but she was smiling when she said it. She said she kept laughing to herself all through her next lesson because I looked so pleased with myself after I'd done it. She also told me she saw one of the first year girls stick two fingers down her throat and make a face and she really wanted to say to her, "Wait 'til you're seventeen, you won't be complaining then!" I am chuckling to myself thinking about it. And yeah, I am really pleased with myself. Hey, who wouldn't be? I might do it again tomorrow if I get the chance!

June 8th

Finally managed to persuade Hermione to go outside for a walk with me today. Turned into a bit of a *walk*, too! It was too nice a day to be stuck inside and Harry and Ginny had already gone out for a walk themselves, so I pointed this out to her, but she wasn't having any of it. I said, look, we've been hanging around together all the time for six years, why would anyone get suspicious if we carry on doing it? And everyone knows Harry's going out with Ginny now, so it's inevitable we'd be spending more time together where it's just the two of us. So, really, no-one would bat an eyelid if we actually went outside and went for a walk. She says, well, that's all *true* of course, and maybe we *could* go for a walk outside... but we wouldn't be able to do anything in case anyone saw. *Nothing*. No kissing, no holding hands, and definitely nothing *else*. In fact, she'd be willing to go

for a walk with me, but only on the condition I keep my hands in my pockets for the entire time we're out there. I protest, "What about you? Are you going to keep your hands in your pockets too? Or are you just that certain you'll be able to resist me?" She says, yes, she's that certain and just to prove it, if it turns out she can't, I have her permission to take my hands out of my pockets and do whatever I like with them!

This seems like a pretty good deal to me, so I agree to her conditions and ten minutes later we're walking across the grounds and up into the hills surrounding the castle. It's a nice day out - blue sky, sunshine, fluffy white clouds, nice breeze. I'm just happy to be outside. Especially when I realise that according to her rules I can't kiss her and I can't touch her, but I can speak. She's left me with my best weapon! There's absolutely nothing she can do to stop me saying things like, ahem, "Your hair looks particularly nice today" and "Those jeans make your arse look *tiny*..." I learnt that one from Lavender. Sadly it doesn't work on Hermione, who just gives me a withering look and says, "And those trousers make you look like a telegraph pole (*they're brown*), what's your point?" I do better when I'm just being my usual idiotic self: "What if I lost my balance and fell down a ravine, all because you wouldn't let me take my hands out of my pockets?" She says she'd feel just terrible about it. I say, "Maybe I should take them out of my pockets now, just to be on the safe side." She says, "I tell you what, I'll take *my* hands out of my pockets, then if you fall down a ravine, I can catch you." I say there's no way she'd be able to stop me falling down a ravine, she'd probably just lose her balance as well and then we'd both plummet to our deaths and they wouldn't find our bodies for weeks and we'd be eaten by wolves. She gives me her shut-up-Ron stare and says, "There are no *wolves* in Scotland. Anyway, since we'll be *dead*, we won't be too worried about them gnawing our ankles, will we?" I say, "Would you still go out with me if wolves had chewed off my legs?" She says, of course. If anything it'll be an improvement because she won't keep getting a sore neck from leaning up to kiss me. I say, "I suppose at least if wolves had chewed off my legs I wouldn't have to walk round all those museums in Paris." She says, "Fine, you'll just have to spend the entire week in bed, won't you?" and then when she sees the stupid great big grin that has instantly appeared on my face, "I mean, while *I'm* visiting museums! Oh, shut up!" I protest that *I* haven't said anything; *she's* the one who's obviously been thinking about it. I say, "Why, Miss Granger, you've gone bright red!" She gives me her shut-up-Ron-you're-not-funny-only-the-corners-of-my-mouth-are-turning-up-and-damn-it-I'm-trying-to-be-annoyed-with-you-but-actually-find-you-strangely-endearing-and-incredibly-attractive stare. I like that one better! Mainly because *this* often follows it...

Hermione: "I think you'd better just kiss me before I say something else I'll regret." Me: "Well, if you insist..."

Five fantastic minutes later we're lying on the grass halfway down the hill, nicely hidden from anybody except the pack of hungry wolves at the bottom waiting to chew off my legs. I'm slightly aware that I'm lying in a patch of thistles, but I don't want it to stop, so I don't say anything. Not that I could even if I wanted to, since my mouth's kind of otherwise occupied, ha ha! Who'd have thought a couple of talkers like ourselves would manage to keep quiet for twenty minutes at a time? Harry should be pleased we're going out, actually, 'cos maybe now he'll finally be able to get a word in edgeways! Mind you, he *is* going out with Ginny, and she's no slouch in that department either. Harry might find he can never get a word in edgeways again! Poor Harry, he doesn't know what he's letting himself in for, going out with a girl with six older brothers. If he ever upsets her - well, he'd just better not, that's all. I've punched him once already this year, I don't want to have **t**o do it again! And she'd better not upset *him*, either, he's got enough to be going on with already without Ginny's famous Weasley temper. She made my life even more of a misery with her bloody nagging the whole time I was going out with Lavender. Although - well, OK, maybe she was kind of *right* about that; I was being an idiot. Maybe if I'd listened to her at the time... Yeah, like I'm ever gonna take advice from my little sister! My annoying little sister who knew Hermione liked me all along and never said anything. I mean, if she'd just *told* me a couple of years ago, I wouldn't have gone out with Lavender in the first place, and none of that shit would ever have happened. I might even have beaten her to the punch with the kissing thing. We might have got to go to Paris last Summer instead. We might already have *-you know.*

Anyway, I've wandered off the subject a bit there, where was I? Oh, yeah, I was halfway up a hill lying in a patch of thistles with Hermione's hand up the back of my shirt... Her parents must be so proud! That was pretty much it, anyway. Well, it's all you're going to get out of me! We came back inside after about an hour because she was worried Harry and Ginny might wonder where we were, but they didn't turn up 'til the evening, and clearly didn't even know we'd gone out. You'd think maybe they'd have noticed she had bits of grass in her hair and I kept scratching, but no, they were oblivious. Let's face it, how many ways are there you can get a thistle rash up your back? One, that's how many! One extremely enjoyable way. Well, maybe two. Maybe if I actually *had* lost my balance and fallen down a ravine and landed on my back in a giant patch of thistles. And maybe she got the grass in her hair rescuing me from the pack of hungry wolves. And maybe pigs might fly and Dumbledore doesn't have a long white beard and

Malfoy's actually a really lovely bloke. Hell, I don't even care anymore about keeping it a secret and I'm not sure she does either. Alright, I admit it, I never really did. But there's only four more weeks 'til the end of term now, let's just tell 'em! Why the hell not? Because she'd have you killed, Ron. Oh yeah. Good point.

Can't wait to see the looks on everyone's faces when we finally do tell them, though. I bet Fred and George will spend the whole summer taking the piss out of me about it. I'll have to let them too, if I want them to lend me the money for Paris. Oh, God, they're going to be unbearable. Still, I don't care, if it means I can go to Paris with Hermione, they can say anything they want. I can't wait to see Lavender's face as well. Sorry, Lavender! Actually, I'm not even really sorry. If it helps, you were good snogging practice. Oh wow, next year's going to be *brilliant*. And after that, no more school ever! Woo-hoo! Finally having some bloody *money!* I think I'm looking forward to the money more than just about anything else. No more hand-me-downs from my sodding brothers! Soon as I get my first wage packet I'm buying myself some new trousers that actually fit and aren't a couple of inches too short for me in the leg. And some shoes that don't need stretching spells on them before I can actually get them on my feet. And a jumper that hasn't been knitted by my mum - sorry Mum - and doesn't have my sodding initials on the front. And I'm never wearing anything maroon again as long as I live. And I'm going to buy a round of Firewhiskeys for everyone in the pub. Well, maybe not everyone. Me, her and Harry anyway. Maybe Ginny as well. I suppose I'm just going to have to get used to spending more time hanging out with my sister next year. God, she's going to be so smug about this when we tell her. I can hear her voice now; "I knew it, I just knew it!" Yeah, Ginny, you're a genius. Actually, the first thing I'm going to do with my first wage packet is buy Hermione something really nice. And I'm going to take her out for a slap-up meal. Somewhere stupidly expensive, with wine and everything. I'll have to pay back Fred and George too. Bloody hell, I haven't even passed my exams yet, let alone got a job, let alone been paid for it, and I've already spent it all!

June 9th

Well, we finally had The Argument. The one I've been sort of expecting for the last couple of months. I suppose at least it's out of the way now and I haven't got to worry about it anymore. She is still talking to me, anyway. For a moment there I wasn't sure she would. Like when she was shouting at me for what seemed like centuries and every time I tried to speak she just told me to, "Shut up, Ron!" It started alright, like these things often do.

I'd had a lot of time over the last few weeks waiting for her in the bathroom so I'd spent some of it carving our initials into the underside of the sink unit. Which I stupidly thought she might actually like. I also did it on the windowsill by that spot in the third floor corridor where we first kissed, which I was absolutely sure she would like, and I was going to do it in the common room as well, but there was never really enough time when I was the only person in there so I only managed to get as far as the "R". Anyway, I thought I'd done a good job, nice curly letters and that, "RW/ HG", it's not like it was huge or anything, it was only about an inch high, I just thought it would be, I dunno, I thought she'd like it. So I made her close her eyes and led her over to where it was and showed her what I'd done, and I was probably grinning like an idiot because I thought she'd be all happy and that, but *oh no*. Instead I got, "Oh, very romantic, carving our initials in a *toilet*" and then when I obviously didn't look very happy at her reaction, she changed tack and started having a go at me because she said it was supposed to be a secret and had it not occurred to me that since Harry's famous in this school, we are too, and that not many people's surnames begin with W, and that anybody coming across what I'd done would probably be able to guess instantly who had done it and what we were up to. And another thing, this is a *thousand year old building* and you've *desecrated* it, etc etc. And I got really defensive because I didn't really expect all this, and all I could think of to say was sorry, I didn't think about any of that, I just thought she'd like it. And she said, "How could you have been so stupid?" and I snapped and shouted, "Alright! I'm stupid! Don't you think I know that? I'm *sorry*, how many times do I have to say it?" She said, "You're not stupid, and I wish you'd stop saying you are, because no-one thinks it, it's just you, and it drives me mad!" And I muttered, "You just said it!" And then it all kicked off. Seriously kicked off. She started calm and then by the time she'd got to the end of the sentence she was shouting, and I didn't get a word in edgeways apart from "Yeah, but-" or "No, that's not-" for at least the next ten minutes. Obviously, I've tried to mentally block out some of the things she said, but basically it went something like this:

"Fine. If that's what you want, you're an idiot, happy now? (*Yeah, I'm delirious*) And actually, you know what, you are an idiot, because you could have had me six months ago (*Don't rub it in!*) and you messed it up. (*Because I really need reminding*) But no, you had to go off with Lavender instead! And don't look at me like that (*like I've been hit in the face with a shovel*), I never brought it up, and I should have done, (*No, you really shouldn't*) because I'd love to know what it was I did that was so appalling you didn't speak to me for *fourteen weeks!* (*No, you really wouldn't*) Do you have any idea how hard it was for me to ask you to Slughorn's party? (*um,*

no) I bet you never even thought about it, did you? (um, no) Well, it was really, really hard! (um, sorry) I kept waiting for you to ask me out, but you never did, (God, I'm rubbish) so eventually I had to do it myself (so she did mean as more than friends after all, hooray!), and then a week - a week! - later you were really angry with me for no reason at all (well, not for no reason, there was a reason, it was just... shit) and wouldn't even tell me why and then you went and got off with Lavender as though it didn't matter, as though I didn't matter! (sorry) And with Lavender, of all people! I have to share a dorm with her, have you any idea what that was like? Fourteen weeks, with no apology, no explanation, no nothing! (I know, I'm sorry!) And even when we started talking again, you carried on going out with her for another nearly two months! (Well, yeah, but not really, but anyway, sorry) You'd probably still be going out with her now if she hadn't dumped you! (Fair point) So, yes, you are an idiot, you're the biggest idiot in the world (I'm not disagreeing with you), and I'm really looking forward to hearing your excuse, because it must be brilliant!" (Nah, it's rubbish. You'll laugh. Well, maybe not actually laugh.)

Yeah, that was pretty much the gist of it. Picture me standing there rooted to the spot while she's yelling at me, with all the colour having drained out of my face looking much like I do before Quidditch matches; as though I might puke at any minute. I can't decide whether to run away or not, because frankly, that's looking pretty appealing right now. But hey, I knew this was coming, might as well get it over and done with, if she's going to dump me I can't do a thing about it anyway, so fuck it. I take a deep breath and try and explain about Ginny telling me about her kissing Krum. As I knew she would, she shouts that it's not even true and why would Ginny say that when it's not true, and so I have to explain that Ginny didn't actually mention it was two years ago and not recently, I just jumped to that happy conclusion myself. Then I get, "Well, why didn't you ask her? Or me?" which is so ridiculous I just give her a hard stare. I point out that since I couldn't even get up the courage to ask her out, why the hell would I want to ask her, "Hey, Hermione, have you been snogging Viktor Krum lately?" I can see her processing that bit of information. Then she accuses me of just getting off with Lavender to punish her for kissing Viktor two years earlier, and I point out that I didn't know it was two years earlier, but that doesn't help because she just says, fine, but you still got off with her to punish me for kissing him. I make a pathetic denial but since I've sort of come to the conclusion myself that I probably *did*, I'm obviously not very convincing.

Oh yeah, and I get a big tirade about not speaking to her for fourteen weeks, and I point out that actually I tried to talk to her quite a few times,

she was the one who wouldn't talk to *me*. I mention the time I tried to talk to her in the library after I found out that her kissing Viktor was two years ago, and she jumps on that and wants to know why once I knew I was in the wrong I hadn't gone and apologised to her. I say that I tried but she made it perfectly clear she didn't want to speak to me ever again and that she hated me. She says she didn't hate me. I remind her that she smacked me round the side of the head when we had that argument about Crookshanks, that was hardly a friendly gesture. She says, what did I expect? She asked me out and a week later I got off with someone else and I never explained why and I never apologised, and to be fair, when you look at it from her point of view like that, she's sort of got a point.

Eventually she thinks of something else she's annoyed with me about, which is why I even thought she'd been off kissing Viktor in the first place. Especially since she spent most of the summer at *my* house, with *me*, so when exactly would she have found the *time*? Which I have to admit I didn't really think about. I feel a bit stupid about it now, to be honest. Then she wants to know how come I was so keen to believe it of her when she'd asked me to Slughorn's party only a week earlier. Which, by the way, was *really hard* for her to do, and she only did it because I was clearly *too pathetic* to ever ask her myself. She comes back to this a few times, so it obviously really pisses her off. I try and explain that I never thought she was remotely interested in me, and yes, when she asked me to Slughorn's party I was really happy for about two days and then I heard about her snogging Krum and it just seemed really obvious she'd only invited me as friends or because she felt sorry for me or because I never got invited to the parties. She practically yells, "No-one feels sorry for you! It's just you who feels sorry for yourself!" Which, obviously, I am delighted to hear. Okay, I sort of know this about myself anyway, but having her rub it in isn't great either.

Then she wants to know how I can possibly not have realised she liked me as more than friends when she dropped loads of massive hints and this stuns me a bit because I honestly had no idea and I tell her this and she tells me I'm an idiot and I say yeah, I *know*. I try and explain that sometimes I thought she might be interested but then the rest of the time it just seemed spectacularly unlikely, what with me being a lanky ginger idiot and all. And that's why I never asked her out, and that's why I probably never would have either. She says, so basically, this whole nightmare happened because you feel like you're an idiot and somehow not worthy of me? And I say, yeah, that's pretty much right. She says, "That's... aargh!" I say sorry. She tells me to stop apologising. I say, without thinking, *sorry*. And then when I see her give me a dirty look, *sorry again*. She says, "Shut

up, Ron." and I do, because it's obviously the only way I can stop myself saying sorry. There's a really long silence where I start to hope maybe she's finally got to the end of her list of things I've done to piss her off, but apparently not quite yet.

She says, "And you told me when you were in the hospital that it was supposed to be *me*, and don't you think I knew that? And even after that you carried on going out with her for nearly *two months!*" I think, oh, I *did* say that out loud then, I wasn't sure there for a while. I tell her it wasn't as easy as it looked, dumping someone, I'd been trying to do it since bloody December, I'd never had to do it before, and alright, fine, I'm a coward, happy? She says, why would she be *happy*? She says, wait a minute, since December? What do you mean, December? I tell her that Lavender started to get on my nerves after about three weeks and I spent the rest of the time we went out fantasising about her being killed in accidents. She doesn't think that's funny. She says that's *really* pathetic. I try to explain that I was bored rigid going out with Lavender, and she drove me absolutely nuts, but it wasn't just that that made me want to dump her, it was because I realised I still - choosing my words carefully - *liked* Hermione. Even if she was completely ignoring me. Even if she was off snogging Krum. Even though I thought she hated me. She says, why on earth did you carry on going out with her for another four months? I say, well, if I'd thought for one second I had a chance with her, I'd have dropped Lavender like *that*, but then Hermione went to the Christmas party with Cormac sodding McLaggen, so that sort of confirmed what I'd thought all along, that she obviously didn't give the slightest toss about me. She buries her head in her hands at this one and screams into them. She says she never even *liked* McLaggen, let alone liked him in that way, and was that not obvious? I ask "Well, why the hell did you go out with him, then?" She says, "Why do you *think*?" I shrug. I say, "I've no idea. Because you're *mental*?" She says, "Oh my God! Because I knew it would really annoy you!" For some stupid reason this makes me smile, and I have to put my hand over my mouth so she doesn't see. Really? She just asked him out to piss me off? Fantastic! I tune her back in and get the tail end of "... obviously backfired... Anyway, what was I supposed to do, go on my own? You were supposed to take me, remember?" Which wipes the grin off my face pretty sharpish. I mutter something like, *I could hardly forget*. Of course I remember! I was completely miserable about it for *days*! I don't tell her this, of course. I'm not coming out of this whole thing very well as it is, without making things worse for myself.

Which I promptly go and do by blurting out, "Did you kiss him?" She goes even redder. She says, "Does it matter?" I'm too tense to speak, so she

obviously realises that it does. She sighs and says, "No, I didn't kiss him. Well... he kissed *me*. I spent the entire evening fending him off actually." Oh dear. She should *not* have told me that. I completely lose my head and start yelling:

ME: "WHAT DO YOU MEAN, FENDING HIM OFF? WHAT DID HE DO?"

HER: "He didn't do anything."

ME: "YOU JUST SAID FENDING HIM OFF!"

HER: "Yes, and nothing happened because I *fended him off*. Stop shouting."

ME: "HE KISSED YOU!"

HER: "You were going out with Lavender! Stop shouting."

ME: "I CAN'T!"

HER: "This is ridiculous. *I'm* supposed to be shouting at *you*!"

ME: "It's not all my fault! If you hadn't got off with McLaggen-"

HER: "I did not get off with McLaggen!"

ME: "- I would have dumped Lavender at Christmas!"

HER: "ALRIGHT! IT'S NOT ALL YOUR FAULT! WHAT DO YOU WANT, A MEDAL?"

ME: "Did he touch you?"

HER: "Oh my God! Stop it!"

ME: "I want to know!"

HER: "Why? What's the point? You're just torturing yourself! I told you I didn't even like him, isn't that enough? Do I need to spell it out for you? I... only... asked... him... out... to... make... you.. jealous! Alright? Happy now?"

ME: "Well, if you only asked him out to make me jealous, you can hardly complain when I AM, can you?"

HER: "This is pointless, Ron. I'm not having this conversation any more."

ME: "You started it!"

HER: "Fine, and I'm stopping it."

ME: "No, come on, we might as well get it out of the way. I'm sure there's loads more stuff you'd like to shout at me about!"

HER: "Yes, that's right, there is, and you know full well there is!"

ME: "Go on, then!"

We stand there glaring at each other. We seem to have shouted ourselves to a standstill. I feel a bit ashamed of myself, and realise that actually, I'm not angry anymore. And she seems not to be either, because she sighs and says, "I don't want to shout at you." I don't say anything. Then she says, "Well, maybe just one last question." She wants to know why, even after we'd started speaking again and I knew she liked me, I still didn't do anything about Lavender? I am, admittedly, pretty embarrassed about this. It might have seemed obvious to her, but to me it was like, I think she likes me, but then nothing happened and I wasn't sure and to be honest I thought maybe I'd dreamed what happened in the hospital because I was pretty out of it, after all. And that was March gone, and then as she well knows, I did do something about it after that, I spent a whole month trying to psych myself up to kiss her and making a complete hash of it. She said, "You were supposed to dump Lavender *first!* That's how it works!" I said, "I know, but that was a depressing prospect, whereas kissing you was - funnily enough - a lot more appealing. And anyway, I still wasn't sure, and I thought if I do it and you don't back away or scream or hit me, then I'll know for sure that you like me, and I'll run straight off and dump Lavender. Which I would have done, if she hadn't got there first." She shakes her head and seems completely at a loss for something to say. I'm just glad this argument seems to have finally run out of steam. At least we are now talking at a normal level and not shouting. I still feel a bit sick though. It's that kind of "I've got a bad feeling about this" sickness that I always get before Quidditch matches. I say, "You're going to dump me, aren't you?" Oh my God! Why the fuck did I say that out loud? I thought it, but why actually say it? What the hell is wrong with me? She seems to take about a million years to answer. She sighs and says, "No, I'm not," and then just as I'm inwardly cheering, adds, "But..."

The *but* turns out to be not really a but at all, for which I am more relieved than you can possibly imagine. She says that this conversation (I think, *argument*) was bound to happen sooner or later and at least it's out of the way now. And since it was all about things that happened *before*, maybe we should just agree never to mention them again. She says she won't ever mention Lavender if I promise not to bring up McLaggen or Krum. I tell her that's fine by me. She says "Good." Then I say, returning to the subject of our original argument like the muppet I am, "I'm sorry about writing on the sink." She says, "No, it's alright. I do like it. It's nice. I'm sorry I got stressed out about it. It's sweet." We stand there and look at it and she slips her arm through mine, which I take as the official end of the argument. She says, "And you're not an idiot, you idiot!" which makes us both laugh. There is some kugging. (Hooray!) And I think, thank Merlin *that's* over, and I cross my fingers in my pocket that this is the worst argument we ever have.

June 10th

Bit of an awkward day today. We've both been being extra careful not to annoy each other after yesterday. I might possibly have been trying a bit too hard to be funny actually, trying to keep her happy. And maybe she was laughing a bit too hard as well, so it wouldn't seem like she was sulking with me. But at least we're trying. I think it will be okay. Actually, I'm sure it will. Even if Krum is still writing to her, he's thousands of miles away, why should I worry? And she doesn't even *like* McLaggen - which makes two of us - so there's nothing to worry about there either. She doesn't even like him and she only asked him out to make me jealous. I can't tell you how happy that particular piece of information makes me. I'm actually doing a little dance in my head. I would still quite like to punch his lights out, but you know, that's just 'cos he's a git. Anyway, I'm above all that now. I'm Keeper, not him, I won the Quidditch Cup, not him, and I'm the one who gets to stay up 'til three in the morning snogging her on the sofa, so really, if anything, he should want to punch *me!*

June 11th

Really good day today. Maybe it's because we've cleared the air, but we've both been in a really good mood. There's been a lot of emergency "library" visits! And to think I always said I wasn't a reader!

June 12th

Hey, guess what, I'm not six foot anymore! Picture the scene: last night, about eight o'clock, the girls' bathroom. I was teasing her about the schoolgirl crush she had on Professor Lockhart in second year, which was hilarious, because she was really embarrassed about it:

ME: "He was an idiot!"

HER: "I know!"

ME: "Oh, so that's why you kept writing *Mrs Hermione Lockhart* on your exercise book..."

HER: "I did not! You're such a liar!"

ME: "I hope you stopped fancying him after he tried to bump off me and Harry."

HER: "He didn't try to "bump you off", don't exaggerate."

ME: "Well, he tried to wipe our memories, then. That's bad enough, surely? We might still be wandering around St Mungo's in our pyjamas, dribbling on ourselves and howling."

HER: "Well, of course I didn't still fancy him after that! Anyway, after that... after that I realised I had a thing for tall, red-headed boys..."

ME, looking stricken: "Oh no!"

HER: "What?"

ME: "I'm really, really sorry!"

HER, starting to get worried now: "What?"

ME: "Bill's already taken. They've set a wedding date and everything. I can't believe you didn't know!"

The look on her face was such a picture I fell about laughing. She hit me in the arm, which I probably deserved, and said, "It's almost impossible to pay you a compliment, you know that?" I said, "Look who's talking!" and she laughed and said, "Alright, fine, neither of us can take a compliment. Let's just insult each other for the rest of our lives instead." Me: "Yeah alright. You start." "No, you start." "It was your idea." "I can't think of anything." "D'you want some help?" "Go on, then." "I'm childish and

annoying and I swear too much." She laughed at that one. "You're not annoying..." "Oh, right, but no disagreement on the other two, I notice!" "Well, maybe *a little* bit annoying..." "Oi! Shut it, shorty." "I'm not short! If anything you're too tall..." "I am not! Anyway, I thought you said you had a thing for tall boys..." She laughed. "Did I say that?" "Yes, you did, about three minutes ago." (Oh, and by the way, I am actually getting to the point of the story, have some patience, will you?) So then she asked how tall are you now anyway, and I had to admit I didn't know. I haven't checked since I was fifteen and I was exactly six foot then. Of course, it just drove her mad, not knowing. Imagine there being something Hermione Granger doesn't know! Me: "Who knows their exact height, anyway?" She does, of course. Five foot five, apparently. I said, "You're practically a midget, then" and she said, a bit testily, "*Actually*, the average height for a woman in the UK is five foot four." She knows everything!

So, anyway, then she said she was going to measure me and I'm afraid I couldn't stop the stupid grin that instantly appeared on my face. I said sorry - getting my apology in quickly before I got another slapped arm. But she just smiled and told me to take my shoes off (I said, "Just my shoes?" She said, "For now..." and then laughed at my stunned expression), and she did this spell (she *would* know a spell!) and it turns out I'm now six foot one and a half of ginger idiot. That's alright, isn't it? Not freakishly tall. A lot of boys in our year (and Eloise Midgen!) are catching me up now, which I'm quite glad about. Six foot one and a half is alright for a bloke. Although she says can I stop growing now please otherwise she'll have to start carrying around a small box to stand on. Of course, the other solution is a lot more kissing on sofas. I'd recommend that, actually, as the solution to *everything*. I bet even You-Know-Who wouldn't be such a miserable git if he'd spent more time snogging when he was my age and less time plotting to take over the wizarding world. Shouldn't really joke about that, I suppose, but sod it. Never let it be said that Ron Weasley engaged brain before opening mouth. She used to say that to me all the time: "For Heaven's sake, Ron, engage brain before opening mouth next time!" She hasn't said it for a while, now I come to think about it. Either I haven't been saying quite as many stupid things as I used to - which is pretty unlikely, let's face it - or she just doesn't find me quite so annoying anymore. Or she does, but she's bottling it up and one day she'll just snap and shout, "Oh, for the love of Merlin, *will* you shut up!" Actually, she doesn't really need to anymore, 'cos now there are *much* better ways of getting me to stop talking, heh heh.

June 13th

Harry corners me outside the Hall before dinner tonight and practically accuses me: "Have you noticed Malfoy's been skipping lessons again?" Me: "Er... not especially." Harry, like it's my fault: "Well, he has! What's he up to?" I just shrug. "Maybe he's ill." Harry shoots me a pitying sort of look. "He's not *ill*. He's up to something. And I'm gonna find out what!" Me, feebly: "You're still following him, then?" Him: "Too right!" I make a mental note not to mention this to Hermione, and try to change the subject: "Can you believe that this time next year we'll have finished school for good? It's gonna be brilliant!" Him, suddenly depressed: "For *you*, maybe. This is my *home*." Me, cursing my fantastic ability to always say the wrong thing and promptly making it worse: "Well, couldn't you move into Sirius's old place? He left it to you, after all. And how cool would it be to have a whole house to yourself? Just think of all the parties you could have!" Him, now even more depressed: "No, I couldn't do that. Too many memories. Anyway, I don't want to think about that now. It's a whole year away. A lot can happen in a year." Me: "Yeah. Yeah, it can." Privately thinking, "*You're not kidding, mate!*", and then realising that actually he's not talking about me at all, he's talking about it nearly being the first anniversary of Sirius's death, and the war, and all that stuff. Not about you getting your hand in some girl's bra, *youmuppet*.

And then I remember that last Summer she said we really needed to be there for him this year and not think about ourselves, and I realise that I haven't been there for him at all. Those first few months when I was first going out with Lavender I hardly saw him at all. Actually, those first couple of weeks I hardly saw much of anything, 'cos I had my eyes shut most of the time! Still, I suppose he's got Ginny now. Maybe he talks to her about that kind of stuff, the same way I do with Hermione. At least, I hope he does. It would make me feel a lot less guilty if he did.

He's right, though. A *lohas* happened this year. I've kissed two girls and been dumped by one of them. I've been poisoned. *Twice*. I've nearly died. I've punched my best friend in the face. (Sorry, Harry!) I've grown another inch and a half. I've won the Quidditch Cup for the second year running. What else? I've learnt that I can't take a hint to save my life. I've learnt where you can put your hand without getting a slap. (And where you can't!) I've learnt that actually, Firewhiskey doesn't taste very nice. The best thing I've learnt is that Hermione *does* like me after all. That's definitely worth awoo-hoo! Oh, and I've learnt that you should never eat things you find on the floor. Even if they are covered in chocolate...

June 14th

(Only three more weeks until the end of term, hurray!!!)

So tonight, we're sitting in the common room playing chess, which I've really been enjoying lately, mainly because every time she leans forward I get a nice view down the front of her shirt and I don't even have to try and pretend I'm not looking anymore, heh heh. All of this means she's doing much better than usual, probably because I'm a bit distracted, ahem, and manages to take three of my Pawns in a row. Her: "You'd better not be letting me win." Me: "Like I would." Her: "I wouldn't put it past you." Me: "Why the hell would I do that?" Her: "Oh, I don't know, maybe you're just trying to butter me up for later..."

(I should probably explain that this whole conversation is being carried out in whispers, in case you're wondering)

Me, pretending to be outraged: "What are you saying, that the only way you could beat me is if I let you? I mean, it's true, but I'm just surprised to hear you admit it, that's all..." She shakes her head. "Oh, my God! You're unbelievable!" Me, jokingly, "Thanks, babe!" Her eyes widen and she glances quickly around the common room to see if anyone's listening in. "Shhh! You mustn't say things like that! What if somebody heard you?" Me: "It was a joke. I was joking." Her: "Well, don't." Me, trying to explain and just making it worse, "No, no, it was just because you said, 'You're unbelievable!', so I said, 'Thanks, babe.' D'you see? 'Cos you meant it in a bad way and I was pretending to take you seriously to wind you up... (feebley) ... it was a joke..." She just stares down at the board, her face all tense and annoyed. "Sorry." "It doesn't matter." "I didn't mean to-" "Forget it." "But-" "Shutup, Ron."

World's longest most uncomfortable silence. She sits there clutching her Rook in her hand really tightly as though she's just thinking about where to make her move, but I know she isn't. I offer another feeble "sorry," but she just stands up, announces, "I don't think I want to play anymore, actually. There's a book I need to take back to the library before it closes," and walks quickly out of the room without looking at me at all. I don't point out that she isn't actually carrying a book, and that maybe if anything's going to give us away, that is. I'm not that stupid. I sit there pretending to play chess against myself for about twenty minutes and then give up. If she's going to have a go at me anyway, I might as well get it over with. I'm absolutely convinced I'm in serious trouble, especially since I've kept her waiting for nearly half an hour, so when I push open the door to the bathroom I'm slightly surprised when before I can even open my mouth she says, "Tell me to shut up." I say, a bit confused, "What?" She says, "Humour me. Tell

me to shut up." So I say, more for something to say than anything else, "Oh, shut up!" and she smiles and says, "Make me." And, um, I do...

June 16th

You'd think Ginny would have enough to be going on with what with her exams and going on long walks with Harry every five minutes, but she somehow manages to find the time to pester us as well. Hermione said Ginny cornered her this morning and asked her how things were going and she told her "Fine, I've got loads of homework to do though", and Ginny said, "Things meaning my brother." Hermione says she thinks she managed not to give anything away. She said, "Slowly" and Ginny patted her shoulder sympathetically and said, "Oh God, he's rubbish!" I asked Hermione what did she say to that, and she said, "Oh, I agreed with her of course!" Thanks very much! Later on, predictably, I got Ginny trying to wheedle information out of me as well. The whole conversation was pretty funny, actually:

GINNY: "So, how are you getting on with Hermione these days?"

ME: "Yeah, alright."

GINNY: "Just alright?"

ME, pretending to get all worried: "Why, has she said something?"

GINNY: "No, I was just asking."

ME, fake panicky voice: "Are you sure she hasn't said something? She's said something, hasn't she?"

GINNY: "No, she hasn't! She never tells me anything!" (*I think, well, you've got that right!*)

ME: "Well, that's alright then. See you later!"

GINNY: "For Christ's sake, Ron, are you ever going to say anything?"

ME: "What do you mean?"

GINNY, almost shouting: "Oh my God! You know exactly what I mean! Are you ever going to ask her out?"

ME, having a bit of a mad moment: "Yeah, I am actually."

GINNY, clearly stunned: "What? When?"

ME, trying not to laugh: "Soon."

GINNY: "How soon? It's the end of term in a few weeks."

ME: "Yeah, I spotted that, thanks."

GINNY, clearly a bit wrongfooted by my big confession: "Well... Just... make sure you don't leave it too late, alright?"

ME, starting to walk away: "I'll bear it in mind. See ya!"

Oh, you should have seen the look on her face, it was hilarious! Hermione told me afterwards that Ginny ran straight off to find her (thanks, Gin, good to know my sister's on my side!) and told her she had "a funny feeling" I was about to ask her out. Ooh, Ginny, it's like you've got the gift of second sight or something! Have you thought about applying for Trelawney's job?

June 17th

Hermione got a big parcel by owl this morning and when I asked her what it was she just said it was some "girl stuff" she asked her mum to send her, so I didn't ask again. But then later on she turned up in the bathroom with it all wrapped in stripey paper and said, "I realised I didn't get you a Christmas or a birthday present this year, so..." I was a bit stunned. "But I didn't get you a Christmas present either!" "That doesn't matter. Anyway, it was an important birthday, so if it makes you feel any better, we'll just say it's a big birthday present." "But-" "Oh, for God's sake, just open it!" So, I did, and it turned out to be probably the BEST present I have EVER got! Because it's a pair of boots! They're kind of like Muggle trainers rather than school shoes, except they're boots. And they're bright red too, with white soles and laces, and a star on the side - Seamus has got some exactly the same, only black, but mine are better! I'm wearing them now, and the absolute best thing about them is that because they come up a couple of inches higher than my shoes, you can't see my socks! No more annoying two inches of sock! You wouldn't even know that my trousers are too short! And they actually FIT! And they're NEW! And they're RED! And they're MINE! She can't possibly have known how perfect a present this was, but it really was. They're the right size and everything. There's actually about an inch of space in the toe so if, God forbid, my feet get any bigger, I won't have to put a stretching spell on them just to get them on.

Actually, when I opened the box I started laughing and said something really stupid, I said, "They're red! They're going to clash really badly with my hair!" She looked a bit upset at that: "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you liked red. I can send them back if you don't like them." I had to explain that it was a *good* thing, that I *loved* red, that they were perfect in every way, and it was just that Lavender always complained about things clashing with my hair, and it made me want to wear red deliberately just to piss her off. She laughed at that one - let's face it, she's going to like it when I slag off Lavender, isn't she? - and asked, "So you *do* like them, then?" I told her it's the best present I've ever got, and that she's wonderful, and she got a very good kiss out of me! It's really sad, actually, I can't stop looking at my feet and every time I pass a mirror I have to stop and admire myself in it. Harry keeps laughing at me, he says, "You'd think you'd never had a pair of shoes before!" I don't care though, I love 'em. And I've never had a pair of shoes like *this* before. Muggle clothes. New Muggle clothes. Still in the box and with the tag on and everything. Seamus actually said to me later, "Cool shoes, Ron!" No-one's ever said anything of mine was cool before. I've never *been* cool before. I tell you one thing, I definitely won't be throwing them out of any windows in a hurry!

June 18th

Last night, the common room, waaay past my bedtime... The fire's gone out, so it's a bit chilly, but I'm doing my best to warm her up, ahem. Anyway, being the chivalrous kind of guy that I am, I offer to go and get her a jumper, but I don't want to put a light on in case I wake anyone up, so I just stumble around in the dark and grab the first thing that feels like it might be a jumper. Only when I get back downstairs I can see that I've picked up one of my mum's bloody hand-knitted maroon ones, haven't I? I tell her, "I'm really sorry, I couldn't see properly in the dark" - but she just laughs and pulls it over her head and that makes me laugh too, because she looks *ridiculous* in it. It comes down to practically her knees and the arms are so long you can't even see her hands. She pretends to model it for me, does a little twirl and asks, "What do you think?" I say, "I think you look a lot better in that thing than I do." Her, smiling: "I quite like your jumpers actually." "Now I know you're joking!" "No, really." Without thinking I say, "Lavender hated them. She said they should all be burned." but she just says, "Yes, well, Lavender couldn't find her own face with a mirror." That makes me laugh my head off. I ask her, "Do you *really* like my jumpers?" "Yeah, I do." "Why, for God's sake?" She thinks about it for a minute. "Probably for the same reason you say you like my hair when I don't. Because they're you." That makes me go a completely new shade of red. I

protest, "Yeah, but your hair's sexy. My mum's jumpers-" but I don't get to finish the sentence because well, my mouth's otherwise engaged, heh heh.

Later on when we go off to bed she pulls the jumper over her head and goes to give it back to me, and I tell her she can have it if she likes it so much. She says it might be a bit of a giveaway. I say at least it's not one of the ones with a sodding great big "R" on the front, that really would be a giveaway. She says actually, she'd love to walk into the common room wearing it and see the expressions on everyone's faces. I say, "Yeah, they'd all be like, "Oh my God, what the hell is she wearing?"" She says, "No, they'd all be like, "Ooh, that's Ron's jumper! Bad girl, Hermione!"" That makes me crack up. I still keep laughing to myself all day today thinking about it. *Bad Girl Hermione...* God, she's amazing. Amazing, awesome, wonderful, brilliant, marvellous, incredible... damn, I need some more adjectives. She'd be better at this than me, she knows more words. Let's just use one she'd never use in a million years, a definite Ron Weasley word: *she'sfanfuckingtastic!*

June 19th

Really funny and just a little bit scary today. We had double Potions after lunch and Slughorn was droning on as usual, and it was really hot, and I was practically falling asleep, so I thought I'd write her a little note, and then, *well...*

My God this lesson's really boring

In fact I think I might start snoring

Please tell me, if you're feeling daring

What colour knickers are you wearing?

And then she wrote *this* back:

You really should pay more attention

Or spend your evening in detention

Though I agree this lesson's not

Exactly thrilling. (Polka dot

In white on a light shade of blue.

They're rather nice in fact. And you?)

Oh my God! Polka dot! I nearly swallowed my tongue...

You've made me lose my concentration

I'm sitting here in mild frustration

Polka dot sounds most appealing

Any chance of you revealing

Them later on for my attention?

Make it worth the long detention!

Oh, and I forgot to mention,

They're –

At which point Slughorn, who I haven't noticed has come up behind me, leans over my shoulder and plucks it out of my hand. We watch with horror as he walks back to his desk reading it. He doesn't mention it at all until right at the end of the lesson when we both try and race out of the classroom as quickly as possible and he coughs and says, "Ah... Mr. Weasley... a word?" She mouths "sorry" at me and practically runs after Harry - thanks for the support, Hermione - and I drag myself up to Slughorn's desk expecting at least a detention and probably worse. It's hard to tell who's more embarrassed but to be honest I think its probably him. I'm really hoping he still feels guilty about accidentally poisoning me. He waits until everyone else has left and then he says, "Yes... hmm.. I believe that *this*" - handing back our note - "Is yours?" I stare at the floor and mumble, "Yes, sir. Sorry, sir." He says, "I think perhaps it would be prudent to save such things for outside of lessons, don't you?" "Yes, sir. Sorry, Sir." I glance up then and accidentally catch his eye, realise how utterly mortified he is about the whole thing, start thinking about Hermione's polka dot knickers, and to my horror, lose it completely and actually laugh out loud. *Shit.* Snape would have me in detention for a month for this. McGonagall would have me expelled. Slughorn just goes even redder and says, "Yes, well... I expect you've got lessons to go to, have you?" "Yes, sir." "Well, go on, go on..." I don't need telling twice. "Yes, sir. Thank you, Sir!"

Jesus. How close was that? I don't think I'll ever be able to look him in the eye again! When I saw her later she said we should be more careful, because another teacher might have read it out in front of the whole class and can you imagine how embarrassing that would have been? I said it would be worse for her 'cos everyone would know she was wearing polka dot knickers, but Slughorn grabbed it before I could finish so at least no-one would know what colour my pants were. She said, starting to laugh, well, what colour are they? I had to have a quick look because I couldn't remember so I showed her a bit of the top of them - red and blue checked. I was obviously feeling a bit reckless after my narrow escape because then I asked if I could see hers and she pretended to be outraged and said, very firmly, "I don't think so." Me, jokingly: "Oh, come on, it's not like I haven't already seen your knickers!" Her: "What?" Me: "Last summer. In the holi—" Her, going absolutely crimson: "Oh! I forgot about that!" Me, laughing: "I didn't!" Her: "Well, you did show me yours..." I practically choked to death at that one, and she showed me a little bit of the top of hers (which was one of the highlights of my life!) and then we couldn't stop giggling, everything just seemed really funny. Slughorn's face!

June 22nd

Fuck. Fucking fucking fuck. Everything's gone wrong. Completely, totally and spectacularly wrong. I don't even know where to start, to be honest. Can't just say it. About Bill. And what Snape did, and Malfoy - well, I just can't, that's all. It just makes me really angry, and upset, and I can't do anything about it anyway, so what's the point? I mean, we've talked about it, me and her and Harry and Ginny, we've hardly talked about anything else for 48 hours solid, but I feel like I need to write it down as well, to try and get it sorted out in my own head, do you know what I mean?

They're talking about shutting the school for good. So I guess I'm not going to get to fail my exams after all. Sorry. That wasn't funny. Force of habit. I don't care anyway. I'm finding it kind of hard to care about anything anymore, to be honest. Might be dead this time next year. We all might be dead this time next year. Bill's lucky to be alive at all. *Lucky!* He - aaarrgh, I can't write this!

Harry was right. We should have listened to him. I should have listened to him. All those times he called Hermione a Mudblood, all those sarky little comments he made about my family being traitors to the name of wizard, I should have known! I should have pounded him into the floor years ago. Maybe if I had... Anyway, so yeah, Harry was right, the little bastard really was up to something. *Something!* Jesus. How were we supposed to know?

None of us could possibly have imagined *that*. I hold him personally responsible for what happened to Bill. It's gone way beyond that kicking I was going to give him now. I don't know what I'd do to him if I saw him again. Bad things, anyway. I think I might have to push Harry out of the way to get to him, to be honest, because Harry actually saw what happened. Had to watch it but couldn't move, because Dumbledore had done the full body bind on him so he wouldn't move and draw attention to himself and get himself killed -

I think I might have to try and start at the beginning again.

Harry went with Dumbledore to - well, there's something they've been doing for a few months, that I haven't mentioned because it's his business - so they went, and something happened to Dumbledore, so he was sick when they got back, Harry said he was really weak and could hardly stand, and that was how they managed to -

No, I need to start before that.

We were in the common room waiting for Harry, just the two of us. We were just talking. It's too risky to do anything else when he could walk in at any second, and anyway, he definitely can't see my hand on her thigh from the door because the back of the sofa's in the way, I've checked. We were laughing about getting caught by Slughorn a couple of days before, although it seems like weeks ago now. And then Harry bursts through the portrait hole, running, races past us without even stopping and up to the dorm. He's gone about fifteen seconds, during which there's just enough time for me to make one of my idiotic jokes about wow, he must be really desperate for the loo, and her to roll her eyes and tell me, "That's not funny, Ron." And then he comes back.

He tells us how he'd been up on the sixth floor, trying to get into the Room of Requirement as usual, trying to catch Malfoy at it, and instead he'd bumped into Trelawney. She was looking for somewhere to stash her sherry bottles, only she couldn't get in because someone was already in there. She told him she'd heard a whooping, like someone celebrating, and Harry knew instantly that whatever it was Malfoy's been up to all year, he'd finally managed to do it. And let's face it, it wasn't going to be good. He asked her to come with him to Dumbledore to explain what she'd heard - I suppose he thought he needed back-up. Anyway, on the way to his office Trelawney started talking about the Prophecy, the original one she made sixteen years ago to Dumbledore about Harry being the chosen one, the one who's got to destroy You-Know-Who, and -

For God's sake, Ron, use the bloody name, what's wrong with you?

Voldemort.

There you go, that wasn't hard, was it? The sky didn't fall in or anything.

So Trelawney lets slip that when she was making the Prophecy to Dumbledore, Snape had been there hiding and had overheard. Which means he was the one who passed on the information to - Voldemort - trying to make himself look good, I suppose, and that's why Harry's parents were killed. Because of Snape. I can't even begin to imagine how Harry must be feeling about that one. He ditched Trelawney and went rushing to Dumbledore to tell him that he was right all along about Snape, and about Malfoy, but Dumbledore wouldn't listen. He kept insisting that whatever Malfoy was up to wasn't important and that Snape was on our side. He said that after Harry's parents were killed Snape felt really guilty about it, said he didn't know what Voldemort was going to do - yeah, right! - and came to him offering to work for the Order as a double agent. And Dumbledore actually believed him! That was it, the reason he trusted him all this time. Like Harry says, how could Dumbledore have trusted the person who was responsible for Harry's parents' deaths, purely on his word? He's a liar and a murderer. Dumbledore wouldn't listen to him, though, he kept insisting Snape was trustworthy. Harry says every time he thinks about that now he wants to be sick.

Anyway, Dumbledore told Harry to forget about Snape and Malfoy, because there was something much more important that they had to do. He said he'd finally managed to find one of the Horcruxes, and he wanted Harry to come with him, to try and destroy it. Oh, yeah, Horcruxes. This is pretty hard to explain, especially for a thicko like me, but basically Voldemort's found a way to split his soul into seven pieces, and they're called Horcruxes, and it makes it almost impossible for anyone to kill him, because they have to find every piece and destroy it. And it could be anything. A stone, a pen, a cup, a locket, *anything*. It could even be a person or an animal. So you have to find out *what* it is first, and then you have to find *where* it is, and then you have to try and destroy it, and it's not that easy to destroy a Horcrux. There's no information about them in books or anything. Believe me, Hermione has scoured every page of every book on every shelf in the library, and she's found nothing. If there had been anything at all, she'd have found it. It's possible that no-one's ever done it before, because no-one's ever wanted to. It's not easy to split your soul in two, let alone seven. It makes you less than human. You're alive, but

you're not really, because your soul's broken. At least, that's how I understand it. Does that make sense? As though any of this makes sense!

Oh, yeah, and to make a Horcrux, how it works is, you have to kill someone. That's how you do it, you kill someone and then you can split your soul in two. So for Voldemort to have split his soul into six pieces, he must have had to kill six people. Christ, my hands are shaking. Hang on.

Sorry, I just had to -

Anyway, Dumbledore tells Harry they're going to look for one of the Horcruxes, and Harry knows instantly that if Dumbledore's away from the castle, Malfoy will be able to carry out his plan, and there'll be no-one to stop him. He runs back to Gryffindor Tower to get his invisibility cloak like Dumbledore told him to, and his map, and the little bottle of Felix Felicis - the lucky potion I thought I'd taken that time but it turned out I hadn't - and he comes back down to the common room and says that he hasn't got time to explain properly, but he's going to go with Dumbledore and try and find one of the Horcruxes, and that Malfoy's celebrating something in the Room of Requirement and that whatever he's doing, we've got to stop him, and Snape too. He says we should try and round up as many people to help as possible, because there might be some fighting, and he practically throws the map and the little bottle wrapped in socks at us, and gives us both a look, like he knows this might be the last time he sees us, and rushes out of the room again. And I think that's just about where we came in...

Me and Hermione just stare at each other, stunned. I'm starting to get that sick feeling I get before Quidditch matches, only a thousand times worse. She looks absolutely terrified. She says she'd better go and get her enchanted coin from her trunk, so we can alert the other members of the DA to come and help us, but I grab her arm and say, "Wait!" I don't know what I'm actually going to say, I just know that I have a really, really bad feeling about this, and I don't want her to go. All I can think about is how in the Ministry of Magic last year she got knocked unconscious and there wasn't a thing I could do about it, and what if something worse happened, and - All this goes through my head in about three seconds flat. She shakes her head. "Ron, there's no time." "One minute." "Ron..." "Ten seconds, then. We can wait ten seconds, can't we?" She hesitates. I tell her, "Look, I have a really bad feeling about this. What if something happens? I don't want this to be the last thing I ever say to you." She looks shocked. She says I shouldn't say things like that, and it'll be fine, because we have the lucky potion, although to be honest she doesn't sound like she believes it either. She tries to pull away, but I'm not going to let go of her

arm, not without one last try. "Please." Then there's the shortest patented Weasley two-second hug of my life - only enough time for four words and one very short kiss - and before I've even opened my eyes she's pulled away from me and is running towards the staircase to the girls dorm.

She's back before I even have the time to think about what's just happened or what might happen later, with Ginny in tow. I don't get to speak to her alone again because she's busy explaining the whole thing to Ginny, and then to Neville who turns up looking all excited a few minutes later, and then we all take a couple of drops of the Potion, and suddenly I can't believe I was ever worried about what might happen. I feel fantastically confident that everything's going to be fine, that Malfoy is finally going to get what he deserves, and that tonight is going to be some sort of wonderful triumph. I feel so confident, in fact, that I don't even hug Ginny, which I feel absolutely sick about later once the potion has worn off. We all say "Good luck!" but we're sure we won't need it, and I'm not even worried when we get outside into the corridor and Luna's waiting there to offer her help too. Hermione goes off with Luna to watch Snape's office, and me, Ginny and Neville take the map and go up to the Room of Requirement to try and stop Malfoy. And then everything goes horribly, horribly wrong.

ME

When we get there we've got our wands out ready, because we don't know how many people are in there. I'm pretty sure that between the three of us we could tackle Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle - hey, I got an E in Defence Against The Dark Arts, remember? - but any more and we might be in trouble. I don't know how long we wait, only that it's a long time, and that we can't make any noise in case they hear us and realise we're out there waiting for them. Anyway, eventually Malfoy comes out - I suppose he was checking the coast was clear - but before we can do anything suddenly everything goes dark. And I don't just mean dark like when the curtains are drawn, I mean, you can't see your hand in front of your face dark. There's a lot of shouting, and a load of people rush past us, but we don't know how many, because we can't see anything, and we can't use any spells to stop them, because we might hit each other. Malfoy's got his Hand of Glory, that horrible withered hand thing that gives light only to the holder, so he can see in the dark, and lead everyone through it. Finally, when they've all gone, we manage to stumble out into another corridor where it's light again, and that's when we bump into Bill, Tonks and Lupin, who are patrolling the school on Dumbledore's orders, so he obviously does suspect something might happen. I can't help blaming him a little bit, because if he hadn't told Bill to come -

Anyway, I've got the map, so we can see that Malfoy and his friends are heading for the Astronomy Tower and go after them. Later on we realise they'd gone there to set the Dark Mark over the school, so Dumbledore would see it and think that there'd been an attack and someone had been killed. Trying to lure him back to the castle where they'd be waiting for him. Harry told us afterwards he could hear fighting below, hear shouts and explosions, so he knew we were putting up a fight, and he kept willing us to break through and stop it. But we didn't know what was happening, we didn't even know he was there. And even if we had, they'd put some sort of blocking spell on the spiral staircase at the top of the Tower, so we couldn't get through to find out.

I don't know how many Death Eaters there were, just that every time I hit one with a spell, I'd look around and another one would be coming at me. I honestly think if it hadn't been for Harry's lucky potion I wouldn't be here, because somehow all their spells just seemed to bounce off us. I saw Neville get hit by a flash of something blue and get right back up again, as though nothing had happened. I seemed to remember every useful spell and hex and curse I'd ever learnt, at the exact moment I needed it. I kept looking for Hermione but I couldn't see her anywhere. I couldn't find Malfoy either - I knew he must be there somewhere, and I suppose I just figured if anyone was going to get the little bastard it was going to be me, but I never got the chance. I think I got knocked unconscious for a few seconds, because I remember being on the floor and not really knowing why, and seeing a tall ginger-haired bloke fighting a Death Eater a few feet away and thinking, "Oh, that's me!" But of course it wasn't me, it was Bill. I was a bit confused. Probably a bit concussed, too. And then Neville shouted at me to come and help, and I got to my feet and went to help him, and that was the last I saw of Bill until - well, afterwards. I didn't really see a lot that was going on. I didn't see Snape and Malfoy running back down the stairs from the top of the tower, and I didn't see Harry running after them. So I didn't know anything about what had happened until we were up in the hospital wing half an hour later and Harry told us.

HER

She's the smartest girl in school, but she's got *Luna* with her. I like Luna and everything, but if I could have chosen anyone to go with and look after my girlfriend, it wouldn't have been her. Good thing I didn't think about that until after the lucky potion had worn off, because I don't think I'd have let her go without me otherwise. But then I'd have had to let Ginny go with Neville and Luna. Damn it. There was never going to be a happy outcome to this, was there? Anyway, her and Luna go down to Snape's office to

watch it like Harry told us, and they wait, and wait, and nothing happens for about two hours, and then suddenly Professor Flitwick comes running, all flustered, obviously doesn't say anything to Hermione and Luna about what's going on, and Snape lets him in. Two minutes later Snape comes out again, tells them Flitwick's collapsed and they should stay and look after him, and that Death Eaters have got into the school, and he's going to go and help fight them. So that's what they do. I've got the map, so they don't know what's happening upstairs with us lot, they just do what they're told. Afterwards of course, she realises that Snape must have done something to Flitwick, Stupefied him or something, and that's why he was out cold. He must have come to tell Snape that there are Death Eaters in the castle, and - because Snape's supposed to be a member of the Order and Dumbledore's told him to trust the bastard - he's obviously assumed Snape will help. Only instead Snape must have rushed up to the Astronomy Tower to help with the fighting on the Death Eater side. And - to kill.

HARRY

Harry had the worst of it. Harry *always* has the worst of it. If I ever complain about anything again - Quidditch, exams, Mum banging on at me about my job prospects - remind me about this and I'll, oh, I don't know, punch myself in the face or something. You can even do it for me if you like.

I don't know how much of this I should be telling you, to be honest. I'm not sure it's safe to write it down. Anyone could read it. It's one thing having people read about my stupid fumbling with Lavender in a cupboard, it's quite another writing about things that are supposed to be secret, that Harry promised Dumbledore he'd never tell anyone except us.

Well, I suppose I can tell you that Harry's story of what happened that night is one of the scariest things I've ever heard in my life. And that they didn't find the Horcrux, because someone else had got there first, taken the real Horcrux and replaced it with a fake one, and a note signed R.A.B -

I think I might have to burn this page when I've finished.

Of course, Harry didn't realise this until afterwards, that they'd gone through all that for nothing, that Dumbledore had - for *nothing*. They Apparated back to Hogsmeade and that's when they saw the Dark Mark set over the school. How were they to know it was a trap? Harry says he was absolutely terrified, he was sure one of us must have been killed, he just wanted to get back as fast as he could to find out what had happened.

They borrowed broomsticks from the Hog's Head and flew up to the Astronomy Tower, and when they got there Dumbledore actually told Harry to go and fetch Snape, he said Snape was the only one who could help him - *help* him! - with his injuries. But before Harry could do anything they heard footsteps coming up the stairs, and Malfoy came bursting through the door. Harry says there wasn't any time, it all happened so fast. In two seconds flat Dumbledore had put the full body-bind spell on him, so he couldn't move, couldn't speak, couldn't shout out for help, and that meant Malfoy had enough time to take Dumbledore's wand from him, leave him defenceless. Without his wand he didn't stand a chance. Dumbledore must have known who it was coming up the stairs, known what was going to happen to him, he could have stopped Malfoy, but instead... Harry feels really guilty about it, he keeps saying that if only Dumbledore hadn't wasted precious seconds on saving him, he might have been able to save himself. If only he hadn't been too weak after what happened in the cave.

I think I need to tell that part too. In the cave -

In the cave there was a lake and in the middle of the lake was where the Horcrux was. There was a little boat, and they got in and rowed across to the middle of the lake, and the Horcrux - it was a gold locket - was at the bottom of this stone basin that had some sort of green liquid in. They tried all sorts of spells but only way to get to the locket was to drink it. Harry says he offered to drink it himself, but Dumbledore refused, said Harry was too valuable. And he told him - told him that whatever happened he had to promise to make sure he kept drinking it, right to the bottom. Even if he, himself, begged him to stop. Harry says he only agreed because he didn't have any choice, but if he'd known what was going to happen -

I've just walked three times around the room and I still don't know how to write this.

He says - he says that Dumbledore started drinking, and that at first there didn't seem to be anything wrong, but then he started shaking, and crying and - other things - and Harry had to force him to drink it, practically hold him down and force it down his throat, because he was screaming, and obviously in a lot of pain, and begging Harry to stop.

I can't write this. It's too hard. And it's Harry's memory, not mine. I don't have the right. I just can't.

Harry -

He was under the cloak so Malfoy didn't know he was there, watching, the whole time. All he could do was watch. Couldn't shout out, couldn't get to his wand, couldn't do anything to stop it. Couldn't even blink to shut out what was happening. He said Malfoy was almost boasting, saying that when all this was over he'd be Voldemort's new favourite, like murder was something to be proud of. That was Malfoy's "special mission", that was what he'd come to do. Kill Dumbledore.

The thing is though, he couldn't do it. He kept saying he was going to, said some other awful things too, but he just couldn't go through with it. Dumbledore kept him talking, kept telling him he wasn't a murderer, that it wasn't too late to save himself. Harry says by the end Malfoy was nearly crying. He said he had to do it because Voldemort would kill him and his parents if he didn't. Dumbledore actually offered to help him, said if he came over to the right side, we could keep his family safe somewhere Voldemort would never find them, but Malfoy wouldn't listen, he said nobody could protect him. And then the door burst open again and Harry thought that someone had finally come to help, that it was *us* breaking through the door, but it wasn't. We were all still fighting only twenty feet below, we didn't even know he was there, we didn't know what was happening. And - we were losing. Bill was down, Neville was down. Our luck was starting to run out - literally. If they'd wanted to kill us, I'm sure they could have done, but of course, that wasn't what they'd come for. They just had to keep us away from Malfoy so he could - *you know*.

Anyway, four of them managed to get away from us and up the stairs to where Harry and Malfoy and Dumbledore were. Harry says if they hadn't arrived when they did, he didn't think Malfoy would have done it, and they obviously realised that too, because they started to argue amongst themselves as to whether one of them should do it instead. One of them wanted to, but the others said no, Malfoy had to do it, it was Voldemort's orders. But Malfoy was too scared, he'd lowered his wand, he didn't want to do it. And then while all this was going on suddenly the door burst open *again* and Snape came in, seemed to realise what was going on instantly, and just - just did it, before Harry could do anything, before he'd even realised what had happened. The Killing Curse. One second and it was all over. Harry says he was so shocked he couldn't move. He didn't even realise that the body-bind spell had broken for about ten seconds, and as soon as he could move again he knew it must be true, that Dumbledore must really be dead, because that was the only thing that could break the spell. He could hardly look at any of us when he was telling us this. Lupin said he saw Snape dragging Malfoy down the staircase, with the Death Eaters apparently chasing after them, and just let them go. He didn't

realise, he thought Snape was on our side. Harry chased them across the grounds, heading for the gates, and he knew that if he let them get out of the castle, they'd just DisApparate and he wouldn't be able to stop them. He tried to fight Snape, but he got away. And the next he knew he was kneeling over Dumbledore's body at the foot of the Astronomy Tower and Ginny was dragging him away, telling him we were all up in the hospital wing waiting for him.

BILL

Bill was fighting Fenrir Greyback, the werewolf, the one that bit Lupin when he was a kid. Most werewolves don't want to kill, they hide themselves away at the full moon, but Greyback's sick, he's got a taste for blood and killing, and he -

We thought Bill was dead at first. There was just so much blood. I thought I was going to throw up on the spot. I still feel sick thinking about it now. He didn't look like Bill anymore. If it hadn't been for the hair, and because I'd seen him, what he was wearing, half an hour earlier, I wouldn't even have recognised him. We took him up to the hospital wing and all I kept thinking the whole way there, was, *Mum'll kill me for this*. Stupid things you think in these situations. In the back of my mind I was starting to get this little nagging feeling too, wondering whereshe was, but I kept pushing it back - can't think about that as well or my head'll explode. I think by this time I was just in shock, actually. The others were busy getting Bill and Neville into beds and there was so much confusion, everyone talking at once, telling their stories, trying to understand what had happened.

All I remember noticing was that I had Bill's blood spattered over my new trainers, and when I looked round at the others I saw that their shoes had blood on them too, and that the floor was criss-crossed with what seemed like hundreds of bloody footprints. We'd all been treading in his blood. I think I threw up a little bit in my mouth when I saw that. It seemed impossible that Bill could have any blood left in him at all. I barely even noticed when Flitwick came staggering in, in a bit of a bad way, with her and Luna helping hold him up. I didn't even speak to her, I just registered that she was there, and she asked me if I was okay and I think I nodded. I don't think I even asked her if she was okay too. I didn't notice Ginny leaving to try and find Harry either, although I suppose she must have told me she was going. I just stood there.

And then I heard McGonagall say they should tell Mum and Dad, and that seemed to wake me up. *Mum and Dad*. What was I supposed to say to

them? How could I possibly explain what had happened? What if he *died*? Afterwards it occurred to me that this was what Harry must have felt like when I got poisoned. Completely helpless. Guilty. Absolutely bloody terrified. I got hugged by so many people in a row I was sure if one more person hugged me I'd start crying, it was just awful. Everyone except her. I caught her eye and we sort of silently agreed we'd save our hug for later, when we were on our own. Although that didn't happen. There just wasn't any time.

Ginny and Harry came back then and Harry told us some of what had happened to him. Not all of it, just that Dumbledore was dead, and that Snape had killed him. And I'm looking at that written down, and it still doesn't make any sense.

We got the full story over the next couple of days. He kept remembering other terrible things that had happened, as though he'd tried to bury them in his head but they were so awful they had to come out. Some things he only told me and Hermione. Dumbledore made him promise not to tell anyone else, even members of the Order. Apparently we've "proved ourselves trustworthy", whatever that means. I'm not feeling particularly trustworthy at the moment, to be honest. I really messed up with Malfoy. Not just the other night, but not listening to what Harry was saying about him in the first place. Only caring about my own stupid problems. Quidditch. Girls. If only I'd listened to him! If I had - well, Bill wouldn't be lying in the hospital wing, for a start.

Oh God, the worst thing, the absolute worst thing, was the look on Mum's face, the sound she made when she saw him. It was just horrible. I hope I never have to see or hear anything like that again. This is the second time she's had to come up to the school this year, once for me and once for Bill. I never really thought about what it must have been like for my mum and dad, all I cared about was that Hermione was talking to me again and that I'd missed a Quidditch match. It's weird when it happens to you, the nearly dying thing. It's like it's not real. You're sort of vaguely aware that something's happened to you, but actually, it hasn't, it's happened to everyone else. They're the ones freaking out, you just get to lie there and have people bring you grapes, and you've got a great excuse to get out of homework for a couple of weeks. You get to turn it into a funny anecdote - "When I nearly died...", like it's a joke. But it's not a joke, not for the other people around you. I got off pretty lightly, considering. I mean, I actually felt better when I got out of hospital than before I went in. But Bill...

I keep thinking about Mum, what she's been through in the last eighteen months, all the people she's nearly lost. First my dad, then me, then Bill. And what Bill said last Summer, about her losing her two brothers in the last war and having six sons of age to fight - and die - in this one. Harry and Hermione don't realise what it's like, coming from a large family. She's just got her mum and dad to worry about, and they're Muggles, they're not right in the middle of it all like my family are. Harry - well, that's not a fair comparison. But I've got nine people in my family, and most of them are in the Order, and when you look at it like that, the odds aren't good, are they? Percy's a prat and the twins are a pain in the arse, but I don't want them to die. Four of us have already been nearly killed in this war. Four out of nine. Maybe next time we won't be so lucky. I bet Mum wonders why she was ever worried about Charlie going off to Romania to work with dragons, and she went mental about that. We still use it as a benchmark of Mum's freaking out level. "It's as bad as that time the twins accidentally burned down the shed, but not quite as bad as when Charlie wanted to go to Romania." Still, I suppose being savaged nearly to death by a werewolf kind of puts all Fred and George's antics into perspective, doesn't it? Charlie came back from Romania. Dad rebuilt the shed. Bill might not get better. Nobody knows what'll happen to him now because Greyback hadn't transformed when he bit him. Lupin says there's no precedent for it, so he can't tell us anything. We'll just have to wait for the next full moon and cross our fingers. Cross everything.

I keep thinking about *her* too. She feels really guilty about it, like it's somehow her fault. We all do. Harry feels guilty because he thinks that if only Dumbledore hadn't tried to save him, he might have had time to save himself. I feel guilty because if I hadn't screwed up outside the Room of Requirement I could have stopped Malfoy. She feels guilty because she thinks she could have tried to stop Snape leaving. I'm very glad she didn't, though. I keep thinking about what he would have done to her if she'd got in his way. He'd have killed her without thinking twice, I'm certain of it. He'd have killed any of us without thinking twice.

She also feels guilty because it turns out it was Malfoy who sent Slughorn that bottle of poisoned mead, meaning for it to get to Dumbledore. He told Dumbledore he got the idea from her - he overheard her in the library, talking about how Filch can't recognise Potions if they're in the wrong bottles. That's how Romilda Vane got her sodding love potion into the school, and that's how Malfoy's poisoned mead got to Slughorn in the first place. So it's thanks to him I spent nine days in the hospital wing, and alright, maybe if I hadn't got poisoned she wouldn't have started talking to me again and I might still be going out with Lavender, but that's not the

point. God, he must have been *delighted* when he got me instead. Like losing a Knut and finding a Galleon. He got the idea for how to send a message to his Death Eater mates from her too. They used enchanted coins, same as we did. It's kind of sick that last month we were using them to arrange our little night-time meetings in the common room, like it was a game, and all the time Malfoy was plotting *this*.

The look she gave me when Harry told us, though. She just looked gutted. Like I might hold it against her or something. Blame her for something Malfoy did. I mean, it's hardly her fault if Malfoy's too stupid to think of his own ideas and has to nick them from her, is it? None of this is her fault. I told her, "Listen, I'm glad Malfoy poisoned me. If he hadn't, I wouldn't have you, would I?" But even as I said it I knew that maybe I *didn't* have her anymore, I just didn't know it yet. God, if only I'd had the guts to tell Hermione I liked her *last year!* If only I hadn't kissed Lavender instead. If only we'd told Harry a month ago instead of keeping it a secret, but now... now we might never get to tell him.

There are a million *if onlys*. If only Dumbledore hadn't left! If only I'd listened to Harry when he kept telling me Malfoy was up to something. If only more people had turned up to help, if only we'd had more of the Felix Felicis to go around, if only Dumbledore hadn't trusted Snape, if only Bill hadn't been on duty for the Order that night, if only Fred and George hadn't sold their Peruvian Instant Darkness powder to freaking Malfoy... It doesn't help, but it's all we can do, keep going over and over it all trying to make sense of it.

It's pointless, I know, but I can't help thinking that if there was just something we'd have done differently none of this would have happened. Bill wouldn't have got injured and Dumbledore wouldn't be dead. If only the entire supply of Ministry time-turners hadn't been destroyed last Summer, maybe we could have gone back a few hours and changed everything. But then, why not go back a month so you'd have time to make a decent supply of lucky potion? Why not four months, and stop me drinking that poisoned wine? Eight months and I wouldn't have gone out with Lavender. A year and Sirius wouldn't have died. Christ, why not just go back to before Voldemort was born and stop the whole damn thing! I could drive myself mad thinking about all the ways this might have turned out differently, but the fact is, it happened. I've got to stop dwelling on the past and concentrate on now, because whether I like it or not, this is probably going to get worse before it gets better. I can't think too far ahead. Hell, I can hardly think much further than the end of this sentence. I definitely can't think about going to Paris, or getting a flat together, or anything in the future. Anything good.

June 23rd

Just come back from seeing Bill in the hospital wing. We had a long talk. Bill says he feels fine, or at least, better than he looks. He says he's got to get well because he's getting married next month, and it's already cost so much money, Mum'll kill him if they have to call it off, and he started laughing. I asked him how can he joke about it, why isn't he angry about what's happened to him, and he said he's getting married to the most beautiful woman in the world, why would he be angry? And I, er, told him about Hermione. I don't know why, exactly. I suppose I just wanted to talk to someone about it and I knew he wouldn't tell anybody. And do you know what he said? He said: "*About bloody time!*"

ME: "What's that supposed to mean?"

BILL: "Oh, come on, you've fancied her for years, haven't you?"

ME, horrified: "Does everyone know about this?"

BILL, starting to laugh: "Well, I'm not sure about Great-Auntie Muriel..."

ME: "Ah, fuck."

BILL: "Ow... Please don't make me laugh, Ron, it hurts too much..."

ME: "Well, I'm glad you think it's funny!"

BILL: "No, I'm sorry, it's not funny. *Ouch.* Not really, anyway. Hermione's a lucky girl."

ME: "Shut up!"

BILL: "No, really. Come on, you can be a total idiot sometimes, but you're still a Weasley. We're smart, we're funny, we have *really* good hair... We're a catch!"

ME, sceptically: "What, even Percy?"

BILL, chuckling: "Well, maybe not Percy."

ME: "Smart, funny, and *broke*, yeah, *great* catch..."

BILL: "Speak for yourself. Gringotts is pretty well-paid if you want to reconsider being an Auror. I could put in a word for you."

ME: "No, thanks."

BILL: "Listen, don't knock it. I need to keep Fleur in the style to which she's become accustomed, soon as I get out of here I'm going straight back to work. You've got another year before you have to think about any of that, you're lucky. No bills to pay, no wife and kids to feed... A whole year where all you have to worry about is kissing girls and trying to get served in pubs."

ME: "Final exams, no more long holidays, trying to find a job... and that's if they keep the school open, what am I gonna do if they close it? I can't get a job with only seven OWLs! *Sevenshit* OWLs..."

BILL, shaking his head: "Look, this is going to be a difficult year for everyone. I don't know if I'm doing the right thing, marrying Fleur in the middle of all this, dragging her into a war our family's right at the heart of. You've already been through so much, seen things I never even had to think about at your age. I wish you could just have a year where all you have to worry about is kissing girls and trying to get served in pubs, but that's probably not going to happen. This isn't how I'd have chosen to spend my first year of marriage, either."

He goes silent for a bit, then he says he's been thinking about going to see Percy, to ask him to come to the wedding. He sent him an invitation last year, but he never heard back. He says look, things like this happening make you realise that's life's short, and I'm too young to realise that yet, but I will, probably sooner than I should. He says he remembers when he was my age he thought he was immortal, and that nothing serious would ever happen to him. He tells me he was talking to Lupin about this the other day, and he said the same, that him and his mates all thought they'd be friends forever, and look what happened to them. Harry's parents are dead, Sirius is dead, Pettigrew betrayed his friends and became a Death Eater... Lupin's the only one left. Bill says the best piece of advice he can give me is to make the most of any time we have. "Get as much kissing done as possible!" And I know what he's saying, but... I mean, of course I'd rather spend the summer kissing Hermione in hay fields. Of course I'd rather stay at school and at least have the chance of passing my exams and getting to be an Auror. Of course I'd rather everyone I know doesn't die. I'd sort of rather not die myself if I can help it. At least, not before I've - we've - uh, well, you know... I just don't think I'm going to get a choice.

June 24th

Just come back from visiting Bill again. Mum and Fleur were both there too. It's weird, they used to pretty much hate each other and now suddenly it's like they're best friends or something. I think Mum thought Fleur would run a mile when she saw how badly Bill had been injured, but she didn't, she's been here every day. Even when he's asleep she just sits there with him. Like Hermione did with me, in fact. I should ask her about that. I don't know why I never have. I suppose I didn't want to find out that one of my best memories wasn't real, that she wasn't there, that I'd just imagined it all. And maybe I realised that if it was real, if she was there, holding my hand, crying by my bedside... well, that's actually a little bit scary. I can't pretend she just thinks I'm her idiot friend anymore. She really likes me. She *really* likes me. She likes my stupid hair and my stupid jokes and my stupid freckles. She even likes my stupid jumpers, for God's sake. She likes stupid *me* and I should be happy about that, shouldn't I? I should be dancing around the bloody room. But knowing that - that it's not just one-way, that in a few weeks we were going to tell everyone and then we could have properly been together - well, that just makes it harder.

We managed to snatch a few minutes alone yesterday and I said to her, "We're never going to be able to tell him, are we?" She shook her head and said, "Not anytime soon." I know what she meant by that, she meant we can't even think that far ahead anymore. We have to just concentrate on what's happening right now, because tomorrow or the day after or next week we could all be dead. I didn't even bother asking about Paris. Everything normal like that just seems weird now. It's weird that I ever cared about my bloody shoes, or not getting good enough grades to be an Auror, or whether Hermione really did get off with McLaggen at the Christmas party. None of it matters anymore. I don't even know if there's still an *us*. It's not the most important thing anymore, is it? It still feels like it is, to *me*, but I know that it's not.

Me and her haven't really talked about what's happened. We've talked about it with Harry, of course, but not on our own. There's not been any time. We haven't talked about what happened *before*, either. What I said. There was a snatched five minutes the day after when Harry went off for a long walk with Ginny, but that was mainly just a very, very long hug. A good hug, but still just a hug. Actually, it was a bit like that hug I *didn't* get from her last Christmas. The Christmas before, I mean. When my dad was in hospital and she went to hug me and I didn't let her because I thought I was going to cry. It was like that. I didn't want to cry, because - well, I just didn't - but I didn't want to let her go, either. I might have lost her that night. I still might. I keep thinking about what if she'd tried to stop Snape, what he might have done to her, and getting this icy shiver up my spine. Later on I

went to have a bath, to get some time to myself to think - actually, no, some time *not* to think. I'm sick of thinking and talking and hearing about everything that's happened, I just want to go back to last week when all I had to worry about was getting a detention from Slughorn for writing filthy notes in classes. I sat there *not* thinking about it 'til the bathwater went cold. Didn't want to go back out there and see the expression on Harry's face and have to have that conversation again, realise that it's all true, it really happened, Dumbledore's really dead. Even last week it was like a game, me and her. Trying to keep it a secret from the others. But now it's *really* serious. Not just because of what I said to her, either. Everything's different now. Everything's divided into *then*, our lives before, and *now*. All of that stuff - Lavender, getting poisoned, trying to work out whether Hermione liked me as more than just friends - seems like a million years ago. My whole life up to five days ago already seems like it's fading away, and there's just now, this moment, and everything that's happened and will happen after.

I can't believe that this time last week the sum total of my ambition was to finally get to kiss Hermione in public. I'd sort of imagined it happening on the last day of school. Maybe at the station when our parents came to pick us up, or in the dinner hall on the last night of term. I was going to make a big dramatic gesture. Take her in my arms, tip her backwards, big kiss, huge round of applause, thank you, you're too kind, thank you all! Everyone staring. Harry amazed we'd managed to keep it a secret for so long. Ginny looking smug. Her all stunned and impressed. I was sort of hoping to make up for taking such a pathetically long time to kiss her in the first place. And even then she had to make the first move, I just stood there like a lemon. So, yeah, it was going to be spectacular. For once in my life. I was going to sweep her off her feet. But *now*... it's like someone's offered me a handful of Galleons and then snatched their hand away at the last minute.

And I know it's ridiculous to still be thinking about stuff like that after everything that's happened, but I can't help it. I've been thinking about it - *her* - for so long it's kind of hard to switch it off in my brain, think about something else instead. I know none of my stupid dreams are important anymore, and I know there's a war on, and people have died, and I shouldn't be thinking of myself at a time like this, but honestly, right now, at this moment, if you gave me a choice and if I'd passed my sodding test - I would take her and just DisApparate the fuck out of here. Go and live in a cottage in the Outer Hebrides or something. Somewhere not hot. Alaska. Just somewhere away from all this. I know I couldn't do it, though. Leave Harry, and my family. And anyway, what the hell would I do in Alaska? I

can't fish. I'm not even a very good swimmer. Lavender thought that was hilarious. "You're a water sign and you can't swim?" I used to like swimming when I was a kid but I haven't swum for years. Not since the point I realised it probably wouldn't be the best idea for Hermione to see me in a pair of swimming trunks, anyway. Not with my legs.

And I'm rambling. I'm rambling because I'm nervous, and I'm nervous because in an hour -

No, not nervous. *Terrified*.

I think I always knew, somewhere in the back of my mind, that this wasn't going to have a happy ending. We might get a year, or a few months, or weeks, or no time at all. But eventually, we *are* going to have to fight. I mean, it's not like Voldemort's gonna wait until we've taken our exams, is he? "I *was* going to kill Harry Potter, but I'd better let him sit his NEWTs first..." No. People I care about might die. *I* might die. Maybe that's why I never bothered too much about getting my homework in on time. Jesus, I can't seem to stop making jokes, what the hell is wrong with me?

I can't imagine what dying might feel like. I know what *not* dying feels like. But dying? One minute you're there and then - you're not. You just don't exist anymore. A flash of green light and it's all over. Mind you, there are lots of other not so quick, much more horrible ways to die. When Dad got bitten by that snake it was at least half an hour before help arrived. He must have *known* he was going to die. Lying there in a pool of his own blood. Life flashing before your eyes, all that kind of thing. At least the Killing Curse is pretty much instant. One second, that's all it takes. You wouldn't even know you were going to die. That would be okay, I think. I don't think I'd want any warning. What would be the point? Although I suppose at least if you knew you had, I dunno, two hours to live or something, you could say goodbye to people. Mind you, that would be a cheerful conversation, wouldn't it? "See you tomorrow, Ron!" "Yeah... *about* that..."

It makes my head hurt just thinking about it, to be honest. The idea that I might die seems just as likely as the idea that I might miraculously pass all my exams and get to be an Auror. Or Paris. I never really believed that would happen, either. But then, this time last year I couldn't have imagined all *this*. Me and her. Hey, if I had two hours to live, maybe I could persuade Hermione to have sex with me! Last request and all that. Mind you, she'd probably just spend the whole time crying. Whenever I've thought about it before, it hasn't really involved the girl being in floods of tears. Not unless I

turn out to be *really* rubbish at it, anyway. That's something else I can't imagine. What *that* might feel like. I can't really ask Bill that one. Oh, hey, I forgot to mention: I asked Bill how tall he is and he says he's six foot two. I don't begrudge him that extra half an inch, though. Considering everything he's been through. And considering I've probably got at least another year's worth of growing to do, so I might still beat him. Maybe if I'm lucky I'll live to see six foot three. Har har.

The thing I *can* imagine, though, is other people dying. Her, I don't even want to think about. *Harry*, though... Harry's like one of my brothers, only a lot less annoying. And he *really* might die. I mean, he's not even seventeen yet, how's he supposed to fight the most powerful wizard that ever lived and win? Not just defeat him, actually *kill* him. Even with our help. Although I don't know how much help I'll be. I suppose I can, I dunno, hold his coat or something. But what if he dies and there's nothing I can do to stop it? If he can't defeat Voldemort, there's no way I can. If Harry can't do it, if he *dies*... It'll all be over. For all of us.

No, that's not going to happen. Nothing's going to happen to Harry, or to any of my family, and nothing's going to happen to her, because I won't let it. Yeah, I've got to think positive. So, we might all be dead next week! Well, hey, we *mightnot*. We might find all the Horcruxes and Harry might finish off Voldemort and it might all be over by August. We can go back to school in the Autumn and she can get to be Head Girl like she always wanted. I can try and scrape the grades I need to be an Auror - although working in a bank's looking kind of appealing right now, ironically. Bill knew what he was talking about there. And Harry can get to finally just be normal for the first time in his life. And me and Hermione...

Oh God. I just have the worst feeling about this. Like everything's going to go wrong and there's nothing I can do to stop it. Tonight we've agreed to meet in the common room at 2 a.m, because tomorrow morning it's the funeral and then straight afterwards the train's coming to take us all home. So this is our last night. It *mightreally* be our last night. She said we needed to talk, and you know what*that* means. And even if it doesn't mean that, it still might be the last chance we get to spend any proper time alone together for a very long time. When I kiss her it might be the last time ever. And I know I said I was going to think positive, but it's kind of hard to when your only thought, every waking second, is, *please God, don't take her away from me*. I honestly feel like my head might burst open. Too much thinking, I suppose. Ha, I can hear Fred and George's voices now: "That'll be a first!" And I can't believe I can still find the time to make stupid bloody jokes when my whole life's about to fall apart.

It might be that seven weeks is all I get. *Seven weeks!* I want to say it's not fair, but then a lot of things aren't fair. It's not fair that Mum should have to go through all this worry again. It's not fair what happened to Bill. It's not fair that she might not get to take her exams after working so hard for six years. She shouldn't have to miss her exams. She should get to be Head Girl. She should get to see Paris. She should get everything she wants. I'm lucky, at least I *got* what I wanted. The only thing I've ever really wanted. Even if it was for only seven weeks.

I wish... I wish we could just have the Summer. Even if we don't go to Paris, it would be great just to be able to go for lots of nice long walks in the fields around the house with her. Getting sunburn and heatstroke and grass stains on my clothes and new freckles for her to count. Not getting any sleep. Hopefully for good reasons rather than bad ones, ha ha. And it's not even that that I'm thinking about, it's everything else. Just being able to be with her. Not having to arrange it in advance. Not having to worry about other people finding out. Not having anything else at all to worry about for six whole weeks. Although knowing her she'd probably already have started worrying about her finals, even though they're a year away. I can just imagine her insisting on taking a book with her on one of our nice long walks and trying to get some early revision in. And me trying my level best to distract her. Hey, that's my job! Distracting Hermione. It would be nice to be able to distract her outside, that's all.

God, if only I'd known these last seven weeks might be all I'd get, I'd have - I don't know, would I have done anything differently? Maybe it's better that we didn't know. All those nights of horizontal snogging on the common room sofa. All those snatched five minute kuggling sessions in the bathroom between lessons. That time we went for a walk in the grounds and I got thistle rash. Less than a week ago I was standing in the bathroom with her while she showed me the top of her polka dot knickers, for Christ's sake. How can I just go back to being friends with her after that? Pretending I'm not thinking about other things in my head. Kissing her. Touching her. Even just holding her hand. What if I never get to do any of that again? What if that's it? See, this is why I've got to stop this diary. Stop imagining the worst. At least we had those seven weeks. At least I got to tell her how I felt about her. At least we did get to spend those few weeks together like everything was normal, like we were just normal, like we weren't involved in all this.

Even at my most optimistic the best I can imagine is that we put it on hold until all this gets sorted out, and that it's over quickly, and nobody else I care about is badly injured or - or killed. I'm trying to keep it together, to

keep strong, because, well, what else can I do? If I thought about what might happen, that I might lose her, that less than two months is all we get, I've have to chuck myself off the Astronomy Tower. Because I have a really bad feeling about this. Every way I look at it I can't see how there can possibly be a happy ending. Bill was lucky -*lucky!* - not to have been killed. If we all get through this unharmed it'll be a bloody miracle. And my family's one thing, but if anything happened to her... I don't know what I'd do. I don't think I'd cope very well. I think I might crack up. I remember how bad it was in February, when she wasn't talking to me. I thought I was cracking up then, but at least she was still here... The only way to deal with it is not to think about it at all, or try not to. It's better not to think about these things too much. The future. Maybe when it's all over we can think about normal stuff again. Passing our exams. Finding jobs. Getting a flat together.*Ha.* I'm never going to get to spend that fifteen Galleons, am I?

Everything depends on what happens now. I mean, maybe they won't shut the school after all. Maybe we can just come back in September like nothing's happened. No, you're right, I don't believe it either. Even if we do come back, it's not going to be the same. I don't suppose we'll get to do much revision, for a start. And how can we just carry on like everything's normal after what's happened? Harry's going to want to finish this for once and for all. I want to finish this for once and for all. If Harry can do this, and we can help him, that's got to be the most important thing. Nothing else matters now. I can't afford to let it matter. Harry needs us, and we've got to be there for him. I've got to be - ha! - *brave*, and let her go if I have to, and just hope that one day she'll come back to me. Christ. I feel about a hundred years old. I don't want to think about this anymore. I don't want to write about it anymore either. It just makes things worse.

Its five to two. She'll be there now, waiting for me. I want to see her, of course I do, but I *don't* want to at the same time, do you know what I mean? I don't want it to be over. I don't want to have to hear her say those words and then just stand there like it's not killing me. Why the hell did I wait this long? Why didn't I say something last year? All those times I wanted to tell her and never did. All those months I wasted with Lavender. And now it might be over before it's even really begun. I suppose there's a tiny chance she might not say that at all. She might say it's over. She might say, oh, let's just tell him anyway. She might say any one of a hundred things. Actually, I know exactly what she's going to say. She's going to say, "When all this is over, maybe..." That's the one thing I've got to hold onto, that we've *all* got to hold onto. That one day, hopefully soon, this will all be over, and after that, *maybe...*

I'm going downstairs now and I'm not coming back. Well, I'm coming back, I'm just not going to write about it, that's all. If this is going to be the last time I ever kiss her, I just want it to be in my head for ever, perfect, exactly as it was, I don't want to share it with anyone. Even you, sorry. So good night, and I suppose, goodbye. I won't say it's been fun, 'cos it hasn't. You've been rubbish. Anyway, I've got Hermione, what the hell do I need you for?

END